Ethical, Clinical, and Research Considerations for Cultural Neuropsychology

Diversity of patients and research participants is increasing, and neuropsychologists must understand the potential influences of culture on cognitive test performance and have access to training and tools for the appropriate assessment of cognition across cultures. This workshop will provide an update on the results of the most innovative models, methodology and analytic approaches to investigation of cognitive test performance among culturally and linguistically diverse people. Key gaps in knowledge have been explored by integrating information about social factors, cardiovascular health, neuroimaging, neuropsychological function, biostatistics, and genetics. For example, recent work has addressed whether childhood and adult social experiences such as perceived discrimination, quality of education, and geographic/neighborhood differences have an effect on brain and cognition, whether cardiovascular disease mediates the relationship between social factors and cognition, and whether bilingualism confers a cognitive advantage or protection against cognitive aging. The workshop will also provide a theoretical framework for resolving controversy over use of ethnicity-specific norms and other ethical considerations for the clinical assessment of ethnic minorities and non-English speakers.

At the conclusion of this presentation, attendees will be able to: (1) describe techniques to assess cultural, linguistic, and educational experience during the neuropsychological testing session and relate these variables to test performance and risk for cognitive impairment; (2) determine when it is appropriate to use neuropsychological test norms for separate ethnic groups; (3) identify neuropsychological tests or test batteries in which modern psychometric techniques were used to develop culturally appropriate cognitive assessment instruments; and (4) assess competency to design, translate, administer, and interpret tests among ethnic minorities and non-English speakers.