

# PROFILE OF NEWLY DIAGNOSED PERSON WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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## Background

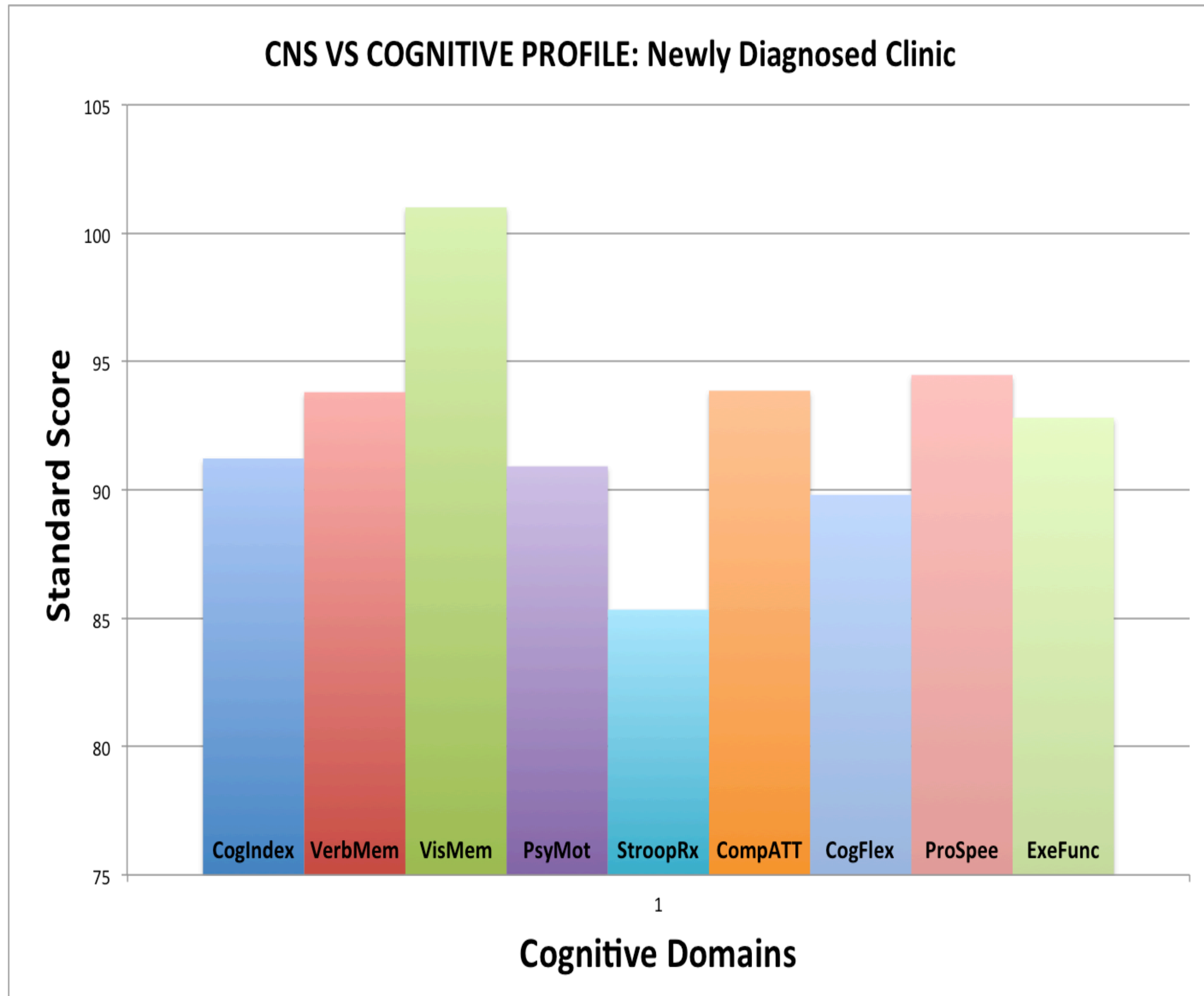
The Tanner Center for Multiple Sclerosis in Birmingham, AL is a comprehensive care center under the direction of Dr. Emily S. Riser. The center began offering a weekly multidisciplinary newly diagnosed MS clinic in August 2011 to provide educational opportunities and wellness programs for persons recently diagnosed with MS. At each clinic, the client participates in a physical therapy, occupational and licensed professional counseling evaluation. Through this clinic, the healthcare professionals have been able to gather baseline data for this cohort to better understand and outline deficits detected at early diagnosis.

## Objectives

The Tanner Center for MS is providing baseline data for each newly diagnosed individual to determine focal areas for therapy, identifying equipment needs, establishing compensatory techniques to ensure vocational independence, and strategies for adjustment to a new diagnosis of a chronic disease. Gathering this initial data has allowed the center to accurately profile a newly diagnosed individual in Alabama, and to have a baseline established to determine areas of concern for future relapses.

## Methods

The Tanner Center for MS identified evaluation tools and parameters based on CMSC, NMSS, APTA and NCBOTA guidelines and recommendations. The occupational therapist in addition to routine evaluation incorporates the Timed Up and Go (TUG) and the Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS). The physical therapist in addition to routine evaluation incorporates the Multiple Sclerosis Functional Composite (MSFC). A computerized test battery (Central Nervous System Vital Signs) assessing multiple cognitive domains was administered by a licensed counselor.



## Results

The healthcare professionals at the Tanner Center compiled the Newly Diagnosed Clinic information to create a profile of a newly diagnosed individual in Alabama. Basic demographic information was compiled with the following results: Thirty six clients seen between August 2011 and August 2012. Age range: 16 to 52, Mean 36. Education: 14 years. Sex: Female 78%, Male 22%. Race: Caucasian 38%, African American 62%. Marital Status: Single 32%, Married 65%, Divorced 3%, Widowed 0%. Employment: Employed 81%, Unemployed 3%, Disabled 3%, Student 3%, Homemaker 10%. MSFC: PASAT 38.8% scored above the mean, NHPT 75% scored below the mean, T25FW 97% scored below the mean. TUG: 33% scored above the mean, .05% significantly above the mean. FSS: 63.8% scored above the mean. **Cognition:** 51% scored WNL on all 8 domains; 16% scored 1.5 SD below the mean in 3 to 4 domains; \*15% scored 1.5 SD below the mean in 6-8 domains. For the entire group, average Stroop Reaction Time (processing speed), was one standard deviation below the mean.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the data collected, the profile of a person newly diagnosed with MS in the state of Alabama is a married, African American female in her mid thirties with some degree of higher education and working. Upper and lower extremity functioning was unlikely to be impaired. While fall risk was low, fatigue severity was likely to interfere with activities and daily functioning. If any cognitive deficits were evident, they were mild, and usually in the domain of processing speed. However, vocational disability was 100% within a year of diagnosis if deficits in six or more cognitive domains were present at the time of evaluation.

