

COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION SYNDROME

EVALUATION TOOL



Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome (CDS) is an irreversible degeneration of the brain similar to Alzheimer's disease in humans, characterized by progressive cognitive impairment beyond that expected to occur with aging. CDS has a slow onset, can be difficult to manage and affects an estimated 14% of dogs 8 years and older.

What Is DISHAA?

In order for a dog to be diagnosed with CDS, owners must observe their dog exhibiting specific behaviors. The DISHAA Tool helps owners identify these behaviors, enabling veterinarians and owners to work together to assess a dog's mental acuity.

D	DISORIENTATION	• Gets stuck, difficulty getting around objects, goes to hinge side of door • Stares blankly at walls, floor, or into space • Does not recognize familiar people/familiar pets • Gets lost in home or yard • Less reactive to visual (sights) or auditory (sounds) stimuli
I	SOCIAL INTERACTIONS	• More irritable/fearful/aggressive with visitors, family or other animals • Decreased interest in approaching, greeting or affection/petting
S	SLEEP/WAKE CYCLES	• Pacing/restless/sleeps less/waking at night • Vocalization at night
H	HOUSESOILING, LEARNING AND MEMORY	• Less able to learn new tasks or respond to previously learned commands/name/work • Indoor soiling of urine or stool/decreased signaling to go out • Difficulty getting dog's attention/increased distraction/decreased focus
A	ACTIVITY	• Decrease in exploration or play with toys, family members, other pets • Increased activity, including aimless pacing or wandering • Repetitive behaviors (e.g., circling/chewing/licking/stargazing)
A	ANXIETY	• Increased anxiety when separated from owners • More reactive/fearful to visual (sights) or auditory (sounds) stimuli • Increased fear of places/locations (e.g., new environments/going outdoors)

COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION SYNDROME

ASSESSMENT TOOL



Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome (CDS) is an irreversible degeneration of the brain similar to Alzheimer's disease in humans, characterized by progressive cognitive impairment beyond that expected to occur with aging. CDS has a slow onset, can be difficult to manage and affects an estimated 14% of dogs 8 years and older.

What is DISHAA?

DISHAA is a tool to help you and your veterinarian assess the mental acuity of your dog, and for your veterinarian to potentially diagnose Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome (CDS).



DISORIENTATION



SOCIAL INTERACTIONS



SLEEP/WAKE CYCLES



HOUSESOILING, LEARNING AND MEMORY



ACTIVITY



ANXIETY

Date: _____

Owner's name: _____

Pet's name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Neutered/Spayed: ☐ No ☐ Yes

Breed: _____

Weight: _____

BCS (Body Condition Score 1-9): _____

Current Diet: _____

Medications and Dosage Frequency: _____

Please complete this canine senior pet cognitive assessment. If you've noticed changes in multiple behavioral categories, be sure to talk to your veterinarian today about the health of your pet's aging brain.

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

Identify signs that have arisen or progressed since 8 years of age and older.

Score as 0=none, 1=mild, 2=moderate, 3=severe

Score

DISORIENTATION

Gets stuck, difficulty getting around objects, goes to hinge side of door

Stares blankly at walls, floor, or into space

Does not recognize familiar people/familiar pets

Gets lost in home or yard

Less reactive to visual (sights) or auditory (sounds) stimuli

Please complete assessment on other side.



BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

Identify signs that have arisen or progressed since 8 years of age and older.

Score as 0=none, 1=mild, 2=moderate, 3=severe

Score

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

More irritable/fearful/aggressive with visitors, family or other animals

Decreased interest in approaching, greeting or affection/petting

SLEEP/WAKE CYCLES

Pacing/restless/sleeps less/waking at night

Vocalization at night

HOUSESOILING, LEARNING AND MEMORY

Less able to learn new tasks or respond to previously learned commands/name/work

Indoor soiling of urine ___ or stool ___ /decreased signaling to go out

Difficulty getting dog's attention/increased distraction/decreased focus

ACTIVITY

Decrease in exploration or play with toys, family members, other pets

Increased activity including aimless pacing or wandering

Repetitive behaviors, e.g., circling ___ chewing ___ licking ___ stargazing ___

ANXIETY

Increased anxiety when separated from owners

More reactive/fearful to visual (sights) or auditory (sounds) stimuli

Increased fear of places/locations (e.g., new environments/going outdoors)

TOTAL (BE SURE TO CARRY OVER THE SCORES FROM FRONT SIDE OF SHEET)

Once this form is completed, your veterinarian will determine the cause of these signs through a physical examination and recommended diagnostic tests. However, even if your senior pet is experiencing multiple health issues associated with aging, there may be some degree of CDS.

A score of 4-15 is consistent with mild, 16-33 is moderate, and >33 is severe CDS.