

## The role of cognition in fitness to stand trial: a systematic review

DOI: 10.1080/14789949.2013.868916

Amanda Jane White, Susanne Meares & Jennifer Batchelor

*The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*

Volume 25, Issue 1, 2014, pages 77-99

20 Dec 2013

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14789949.2013.868916>

### Abstract

The aim of the current paper was to systematically review the quality and design of the literature examining cognition and fitness to stand trial (FST). Ten empirical studies published between 1970 and July 2013 met the inclusion criteria. All studies utilised cross-sectional designs and six were prospective. Study quality was appraised based on FST research guidelines. The study quality was highly variable. Intelligence was controlled statistically in only half of the included studies. Cognitive processes, specifically, processing speed, verbal memory and visuo-perceptual skills differentiated fit and unfit groups. Aspects of executive functioning, including social knowledge and abstract thinking, influenced FST. Future studies should use prospective consecutive designs and multivariate statistical strategies that control for potential confounds. Comprehensive assessment across a number of cognitive domains is needed in order to validate research conducted to date and guide forensic assessment of FST.