OBJECTIVE: The Dementia Severity Rating Scale (DSRS; Xie et al., in press), a previously validated caregiver-based measure assessing dementia severity, was recently revised to improve clarity. Items differentially assess major cognitive and functional domains, suggesting the DSRS consists of two factors. Study aims included:
1) identifying the factor structure of the DSRS
2) examining relationships between neuropsychological measures and DSRS identified factor scores.

PARTICIPANTS & METHOD: Study included 244 Veterans (men = 96.3%; mean age = 71 years) referred to a cognitive disorders clinic at a VA medical center and their caregivers. Caregivers completed the DSRS, and patients completed standardized neuropsychological instruments of memory, executive functioning, language, and attention/processing speed.

RESULTS: Principal components analysis with oblique rotation of the DSRS identified a two factor solution. Factor 1 (43.4% variance), labeled 'Cognitive,' was composed of 7 items that include assessment of memory, language, and decision making. Factor 2 (11.6% variance), labeled 'Self-Care,' was composed of 5 items that assess areas of personal care (i.e., eating, bathing). Individual items with factor loadings equal to or greater than .40 in absolute value were determined significant and therefore interpreted. All factors showed strong loadings on only one factor.

Partial correlations were obtained between DSRS factors and neuropsychological test performance, while controlling for Veteran age and education. Measures of verbal memory and language were significantly associated with the Cognitive factor, while measures of attention/processing speed and executive functioning were significantly associated with both the Cognitive and Self-Care factors.

CONCLUSIONS:
• The DSRS has a 2 factor structure, including a Cognitive and a Self-Care factor.
• ADL functioning is more closely associated with performance on executive functioning and attention/processing speed measures than memory measures.
• Memory performance was not as predictive of overall caregiver perceived dementia severity.