The role of encoding strategies in the verbal memory performance in patients with schizophrenia.

Background Verbal learning and memory is often compromised in patients with schizophrenia who prefer encoding words in order of their presentation (serial clustering) rather than using semantic categories (semantic clustering). Method One hundred and four in-patients with schizophrenia were assessed twice with the California Verbal Learning Test. Results Patients showed significantly less semantic than serial clustering at both assessment times. Usage of encoding strategies were not stable over time. An increase in semantic clustering improved recall and recognition performance. Conclusions Patients with schizophrenia should be taught to use the more effective encoding strategy of semantic clustering in order to improve their memory performance.