Rapid Review of Social Communication Assessment Tools for Transition-Age Adolescents

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Adolescent Social Communication

Social communication skills play a vital role in the success of adolescents with disabilities in both school and post-school settings (Rydzewska, 2016). Identifying and addressing deficits in social communication skills is important for transition planning, a process mandated by federal law (IDEA, 2004).

SLPs do not have a systematic way to select language assessments (Cunningham, Daub, Cardy, 2019). Inconsistencies can lead to bias in who qualifies for interventions and what goals are emphasized in intervention (McLeod & Baker, 2014).

Evidence-Based Assessment

To incorporate Evidence-based practice (EBP) into social communication assessment, SLPs need to identify and use tests with adequate measurement properties.

- This process is hampered by a lack of clarity on how to define adequate measurement properties.
- The COnsensus-based Standards for the selection of health Measurement INstruments (COSMIN) initiative aims to improve test selection in clinical practice.
- COSMIN provides guidelines to identify and rate measurement properties, such as validity and reliability (Mokkink, Prinsen, Bouter, de Vet, & Terwee, 2016).

Our goal in this project is to apply COSMIN standards to determine the level of psychometric properties for assessment tools suited for evaluating social communication ability for transition-aged youth.

Methods

(P) Age 14-21 at risk for social communication difficulties due to development disorders.

(I) Assessments of social communication or pragmatics.

(C) Compared to other available assessments.

(O) Better measurement properties.

(S) Empirical evaluation of measurement properties.

Search strategy based on PICOS question yielded 3274 articles across databases (PubMed, PsycINFO, and ERIC).

References

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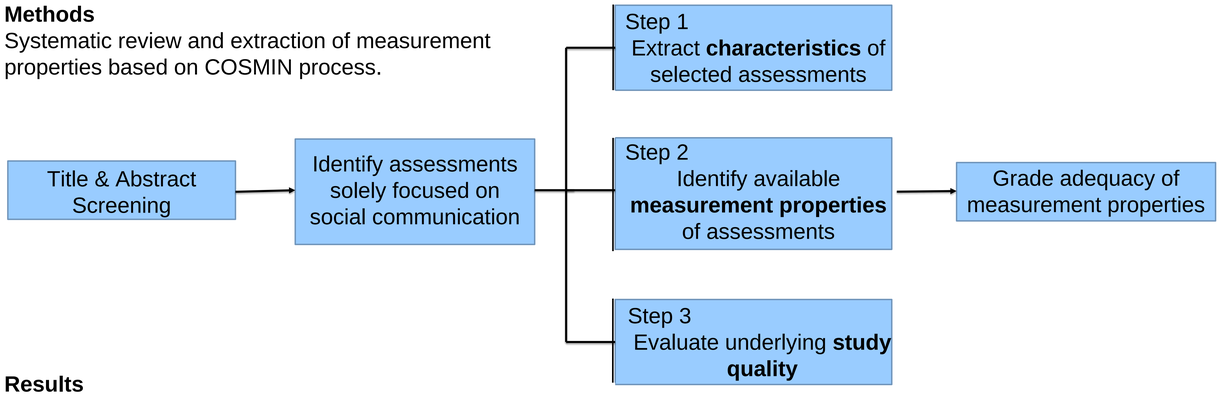
Methods

Systematic review and extraction of measurement properties based on COSMIN process.



Results

Part 1: Partial List: Characteristics of Identified Social Communication Assessments

Assessment (Reference)	Target Age / Population	Mode	Assessment Language(s)	Notes
Matson Evaluation of Social Skills for Individuals with Severe Retardation (MESSIER; Matson, 1995)	Adults with severe to profound ID.	Informant Report	English	More information from Disability Consultants, LLC
Yale *in vivo* Pragmatic Protocol (YiPP; Simmons, Paul, & Volkmar, 2014)	Children and adolescents (9-17 years); autism; typical development	Interview (Dynamic Assessment)	English	Examiner follows script with 19 pragmatic probes; use hierarchy of cues for non-responders.
General Social Outcome Measure (GSOM; Stichter et al 2012)	Children and adolescents 10 – 16 years. Autism, speech-language impaired, other health impaired.	Interview	English	Progress monitoring, intervention response measurement tool. Six unique test forms assess same constructs.
Multidimensional Social Competence Scale (MSCS; Trevisan et al 2018)	Adults 17.5 – 25.5	Self-Report	English	Not disorder specific. Based on parent report measure for children & adolescents with autism (Yager & Iarocci, 2013)
Social and Communication Disorders Checklist (SCDC; Skuse at al., 1997; Bolte et al., 2011)	Age 3-25 years; Turner's Syndrome; Autism	Informant Report (Parent)	English German Spanish	12 question brief screener for autism and sub-clinical social difficulties.
Matson Evaluation of Social Skills with Youngsters II (MESSY II; Matson et al., 2012)	Age 2-16 years; Autism	Informant Report	English Korean Greek	Evaluation of Hostile, Adaptive - Appropriate, and Inappropriately Assertive behaviors.
Social Emotional Assets and Resilience Scales (SEARS; Merrell et al., 2011)	Age 5-18 years; typically developing children	Informant Report & Self Report	English	Measures positive social-emotional attributes.
Contextual Assessment of Social Skills (CASS; Ratto et al., 2011)	Age 16-22 years; High-functioning Autism	Direct Observation	English	Two role play conversations with two different confederates.
Social Moral Awareness Test (SMAT: Livesey et al., 2012)	Ages 19-71 years; mild-moderate learning disabilities	Informant Report	British English	Assesses social-moral rule understanding; content validity not yet assessed in other cultures
Clinical Assessment of Pragmatics (CAPs) (Lavi, A, 2017)	Ages 14-16 years; high-functioning autism; language disorder	Informant Report (SLP)	English	Video-based role-playing scenarios.

Results

Part 2: Example Extractions of Measurement Properties

Property	COSMIN definition	Evaluation of Study Quality	Rating based on COSMIN
YiPP (Yale *in vivo* Pragmatic Protocol)			
Internal Consistency	The degree of inter-relatedness among the items.	• Was an internal consistency calculated for each unidimensional scale? • For continuous scores, was Cronbach's alpha or omega calculated?	Alphas were all above .70, resulting in + (sufficient)
Reliability	The extent to which scores for patients (who have not changed) are the same for measures by different persons on the same occasion.	• Right statistic for continuous or dichotomous/nominal/ ordinal? Scores coded 0, 1, 2 – ordinal. • For ordinal scores, was a weighted kappa calculated?	Kappa (reliability) > .70 is + but doubtful study quality as *weighted* kappa suggested
GSOM (General Social Outcome Measure)			
Responsiveness	The ability of a test to detect change over time.	• Adequate description of the intervention? • Was the statistical method appropriate for the hypothesis to be tested? • Other important flaws?	Final result is – (insufficient) due to small sample

Discussion

- Measurement properties for *social communication assessment* are more clearly evaluated when social communication is *sole focus* of the test.
- Many other assessments include social communication as a component, but measurement properties then apply to a mix of constructs unless specified by scale.
- Test developers use inconsistent terms for measurement qualities, a barrier to assessing psychometrics.
- The COSMIN framework advances evidence-based assessment for social communication by proposing…
  - Consensus terminology
  - Common standards for adequacy for measurement properties.

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