



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders

Journal homepage: <http://ees.elsevier.com/RASD/default.asp>

Review

Assessment of anxiety in children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders

Sabrina N. Grondhuis, Michael G. Aman*

The Ohio State University, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 26 April 2012

Accepted 27 April 2012

Keywords:

Anxiety

Autism

Assessment

ABSTRACT

Anxiety disorders are among the most common comorbid conditions in children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), although assessment presents unique challenges. Many symptoms of anxiety appear to overlap with common presentations of autism. Furthermore, deficits in language and cognitive functioning make it difficult for such children to convey their emotional states accurately. A comprehensive review of the recent literature was conducted to assay the types and rates of use of tools for evaluating anxiety symptoms in children and adolescents with ASDs. We identified strengths and weaknesses in existing scales, identified instruments that (although imperfect) seem to have a good coverage for youngsters with ASDs, recommended strategies for studying anxiety in these youth, and offered suggestions for future scale development.

© 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Contents

1. Introduction	1346
2. Measurement problems	1346
2.1. Overlap of symptoms	1346
2.2. Restrictions due to language and cognitive functioning	1346
3. Current prevalence of anxiety disorders in children with ASDs	1347
4. Review of anxiety assessment measures	1347
4.1. Autism Comorbidity Interview–Present and Lifetime Version (ACI-PL)	1348
4.2. Anxiety Disorders Interview Schedule for DSM-IV–Child and Parent Versions (ADIS)	1348
4.3. Autism Spectrum Disorders–Comorbid for Children (ASD-CC)	1356
4.4. Baby and Infant Scale for Children with Autistic Traits (BISCUIT)	1357
4.5. Behavioral Assessment System for Children–2 (BASC-2)	1358
4.6. Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)	1358
4.7. Child Symptom Inventory (CSI)	1359
4.8. Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children (MASC)	1359
4.9. Social Anxiety Scale for Children–Revised (SASC-R)	1360
4.10. Spence Children’s Anxiety Scale (SCAS)	1360
5. Summary and conclusions	1361
References	1362

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 614 688 4196.

E-mail addresses: sabrina.grondhuis@gmail.com (S.N. Grondhuis), aman.1@osu.edu (M.G. Aman).

1. Introduction

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are a category of pediatric neurodevelopmental conditions that include autistic disorder (AD), Asperger syndrome (AS), Rett's disorder, childhood disintegrative disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder—not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000). AD, AS, and PDD-NOS occur relatively frequently in the population (estimates vary considerably, but the United States Center for Disease Control [2012] has suggested that 1 out of 88 children is diagnosed with an ASD). However, Rett's disorder and childhood disintegrative disorder are quite rare in comparison and usually are not included under the ASD classification unless specifically designated (Fombonne et al., 2004).

One topic that has recently become a common focus of investigation in children with ASDs is comorbid psychopathology and its associated treatments (Bradley, Summers, Wood, & Bryson, 2004; de Bruin, Ferdinand, Meester, de Nijs, & Verheij, 2007; Lainhart, 1999; Lecavalier, 2006). This is at least partially because ASDs are such heterogeneous categories and consequently have diversity in symptom severity, presentation, and etiology (Piven et al., 1991). Anxiety disorders are quite common in children and adolescents with ASDs, and anxiety has a history of exacerbating the level of impairment experienced by persons with ASDs (e.g., Green & Ben-Sasson, 2010; Leyfer et al., 2006; Moree & Davis, 2010; White, Oswald, Ollendick, & Scahill, 2009). Even though the relationship between anxiety and ASD has only recently become a focus of research (Fodstad, Rojahn, & Matson, 2010), there has been a known association between the two conditions since the original account of autism (Kanner, 1943).

In this paper we shall discuss challenges that clinicians and researchers face when evaluating anxiety in children with ASDs. We conducted a review of the recent literature using anxiety-assessment instruments published since 2000 to assess the scope of comorbid anxiety and to determine which measures are being used by researchers. The most common instruments were then examined to determine whether they are appropriate for children with ASD and if they have sound psychometric properties. Recommendations for future researchers and clinicians wishing to explore this area follow.

2. Measurement problems

2.1. Overlap of symptoms

Diagnosing anxiety in children who have ASDs can be problematic because many of the conditions' features (avoidance, irritability, fears, abnormal sleep habits, etc.) are found in both groups of conditions (Kim, Szatmari, Bryson, Streiner, & Wilson, 2000; Mayes, Calhoun, Murray, Ahuja, & Smith, 2011; Tsai, 1996). When this happens frequently (as in the case of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [ADHD] and ASDs) clinicians are encouraged not to diagnose the comorbid condition formally since the problems could be attributed entirely to the core symptoms of the ASD. However, some investigators question whether that is true or if anxiety conditions are “separate, but co-occurring problem(s)” (White, Oswald, et al., 2009; Mason & Scior, 2004). When this situation occurs, professionals can be subject to a “diagnostic overshadowing bias,” or the attribution of the symptoms to the previously diagnosed condition rather than an additional mental health problem (Mason & Scior, 2004). Proper assessment (both through questionnaires and observation) of the current cluster of symptoms experienced by the patient would allow skilled clinicians to determine whether impairments displayed are a product of the ASD or co-occurring conditions (Leyfer et al., 2006; Matson & Nebel-Schwalm, 2007; Wood et al., 2009).

The current version of the DSM (DSM-IV-TR) does *not* permit persons with an ASD to be diagnosed with additional diagnoses of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), separation anxiety disorder, or social phobia (APA, 2000). Although these guidelines are the official recommendation of the APA, it does not mean that a youngster with ASD cannot *experience* clinically significant anxiety, but rather that he or she would not receive an official *diagnosis* of anxiety in addition to his or her ASD. The DSM's guidelines do not preclude additional symptoms (i.e., anxiety) unrelated to ASD core features from intensifying symptoms that are connected with ASDs or further affecting functioning (Weisbrot, Gadow, DeVincent, & Pomeroy, 2005).

2.2. Restrictions due to language and cognitive functioning

Communication deficits are one of the three core domains of ASDs, and up to 50% of people diagnosed with AD are functionally nonverbal (Leyfer et al., 2006). In addition to affecting the way people interact with the world, communication may influence the way people with ASDs experience comorbid conditions such as anxiety. There appears to be an inverse relationship between language ability and anxiety symptoms in children and adolescents on the spectrum. The greater the communication deficit, the less anxiety appears to be a problem for those with ASDs (Davis, Moree, et al., 2011). The expression of anxiety symptoms seems greatest for individuals who are higher functioning (i.e., without severe language or cognitive delays; Chalfant, Rapee, & Carroll, 2007), which typically include either people with AS or those with an ASD but without intellectual disability (ID; APA, 2000).

While it is important to note that higher-functioning children with better language skills and greater cognitive functioning are reported as being more prone to anxiety symptoms, it is possible that this linkage is a fallacy. Lower-functioning children may not have the insight or level of intelligence required to understand and/or express the emotions

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات