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2008-07-01

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Caldarella, Paul; Richardson, Michael; and Young, Ben, "Further Validation of the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders in Middle and Junior High School" (2008). *Faculty Publications*. 22.
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Further Validation of the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders in Middle and Junior High School



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Screening for Students At-Risk for EBD

- Screening for EBD allows for prevention and early intervention, which can reduce the need for more intensive services. Although there has been an emphasis on screening in elementary schools, there has been less work in secondary schools.
- The Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD) is a multi-gated screening system for use in elementary schools. Advantages include relative ease of administration and potential to consider all students in a school before using more intrusive, time consuming measures.
- Recent research (Caldarella, et al. 2008) evaluated the SSBD for use in secondary schools and revealed statistically significant differences between students identified through SSBD screening and non-identified students on office disciplinary referrals (ODR) and cumulative grade point averages (GPA). Significant correlations between scores on the SSBD and on other well established teacher rating scales were also found.
- The current study extends these findings by examining correlations between SSBD scores and parent ratings, teacher ratings, and student self-ratings of behavior.

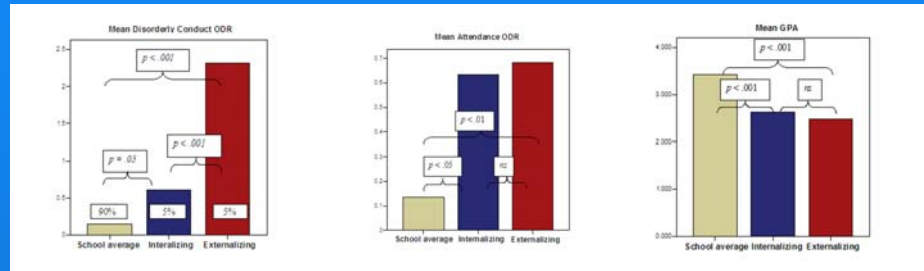
Research Aim:

Examined evidence for the validity of using the SSBD in secondary school settings.

Procedures & Measures

- Three behavior rating scales were used in this study: the SSBD (Walker & Severson, 1992), the ASEBA (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001), and the SSRS (Gresham & Elliot, 1990). Stage One involves nomination of students who exhibit internalizing or externalizing behavior, and ranking them according to severity. Stage Two includes a behavior checklist and two rating scales: Adaptive and Maladaptive behavior. The ASEBA and SSRS contain internalizing and externalizing subscales.
- Classroom teachers completed the SSBD (Stages One and Two) and the teacher forms of the ASEBA (the Teacher Report Form—TRF) and SSRS during a staff meeting at the school.
- Parent participants completed the parent forms of the ASEBA (the Child Behavior Checklist—CBCL), and the SSRS. Forms were sent home with students, mailed to parents, or delivered by researchers.
- Student participants completed the ASEBA (the Youth Self Report—YSR) during an invited lunch. Instructions were read aloud and questions were clarified as requested by students.
- Two additional measures were obtained from existing school data sources (a district database): office disciplinary referrals (ODR) and cumulative grade point averages (GPA).

Results & Discussion



Statistically significant differences were found between students nominated at Stage One (for exhibiting internalizing and externalizing behaviors) on two types of ODR and on GPA, when compared to the school averages. No significant differences were found between students with internalizing and externalizing behaviors on attendance ODR or GPA, though they did differ significantly from each other on disorderly conduct ODR.

Sample & Setting

- Participants were from two suburban secondary schools in Utah; a middle (grades 6-7) and junior high (grades 7-9) school.

Total Students	2173
Male/Female	1087/1086
Free, Reduced Lunch	30%
African-American	.5%
Asian	1%
Caucasian	89%
Hispanic	8%
Native American	1%
Pacific Islander	.5%

- Students nominated for participation via the SSBD:

Nominated Students	226
Internalizing	109
Externalizing	117
Students Invited to Participate	123
Students receiving follow-up measures	66

- Seventy-three percent of nominated students were male, 84% Caucasian, and 13% Hispanic. Students of other ethnicities (African American, Native American, Asian, and Pacific Islander) comprised roughly three percent of the nominated students.

	Cronbach's Alpha	N/Students	N/Items
Critical Events Externalizing Subscale (Items 1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25, 26)	.73	226	13
Critical Events Internalizing Subscale (Items 6, 8, 12, 27, 28)	.54	226	5
Maladaptive	.90	217	11
Adaptive	.88	213	12

Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for scores on the items selected for the externalizing and internalizing Critical Events subscales, and scores on the Adaptive and Maladaptive Scales.

	ASEBA TRF Int.	ASEBA TRF Ext.	SSRS Int.	SSRS Ext.	GPA	ODR Dis.	ODR Alt.
CE Internalizing	.38**	-.11	-.44**	-.17	.17	-.36**	.05
CE Externalizing	.10	.41**	-.07	.43**	-.30*	.31*	-.11
Adaptive	-.28*	-.37**	-.16	-.33*	.39**	-.38**	-.12
Maladaptive	.03	.21	-.12	.25	-.20	.28*	-.10

Pearson's r calculations for scores on the SSBD Stage Two measures and on scores obtained from other teacher rating measures also yielded several significant correlations.

	Pearson's r	N/Students	N/Rates (per student)
Critical Events Externalizing Subscale (Items 1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 25, 26)	.60**	71	2
Critical Events Internalizing Subscale (Items 6, 8, 12, 27, 28)	.57**	71	2
Maladaptive	.61**	65	2
Adaptive	.48**	64	2

Pearson's r calculations yielded statistically significant ($p < .01$) "cross-informant" correlations for scores on the SSBD Stage Two scales when more than one teacher nominated a student.

	ASEBA CBCL Int.	ASEBA CBCL Ext.	ASEBA YSR Int.	ASEBA YSR Ext.	SSRS Parent Int.	SSRS Parent Ext.
CE Internalizing	-.35*	.06	-.29*	-.10	-.30**	-.12
CE Externalizing	-.06	.21	.13	.32**	.01	.26
Adaptive	-.03	-.25	-.17	-.30*	-.08	-.24
Maladaptive	-.01	.22	.03	.26*	-.03	.28

Pearson's r calculations for scores on the SSBD Stage Two measures and on scores obtained from parent rating and student self-rating measures also yielded several statistically significant correlations.

Limitations & Conclusions

- The sample of students was relatively small. The population from which these students were drawn also lacked geographic and ethnic diversity, and did not include high school students. In addition, no formal item analysis was conducted.
- Findings indicate that parent and self-ratings, as well as comparison teacher ratings, support the validity of using the SSBD for screening at the secondary school level. Correlations between ratings on the SSBD and student and parent ratings on other behavioral measures are of particular interest for this study, and support prior research on the use of the SSBD in middle and junior high school settings (Caldarella, et al. 2008).

Contact Information & References

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