

Measuring treatment response in children with autism spectrum disorder: Applications of the Brief Observation of Social Communication Change to the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule

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The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) is a diagnostic tool used for observing and assessing social communication, play, and repetitive behaviors in individuals referred for a possible Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis. The Brief Observation of Social Communication Change (BOSCC) is a newly developed tool designed to help researchers and clinicians measure changes in social communication behaviours (e.g., eye contact, facial expressions, vocalisations) in toddlers and pre-school age children as they play with an adult. The BOSCC is used by researchers and clinicians to see whether treatments work (i.e., by seeing if treatments result in improvements in social communication amongst children with ASD). The purpose of the current study was to determine the utility of applying the coding strategy from the BOSCC to selected videotaped segments of the ADOS. Results showed that using the BOSCC coding scheme on selected segments of the ADOS helped measure changes in social communication over the course of a treatment for young, minimally verbal children with ASD. Furthermore, we found that the BOSCC might be better at detecting changes in social communication compared to the ADOS, so it might help us learn more about how treatments work. Therefore, the results may support the use of the BOSCC on pre-existing ADOS videos to examine responses to treatment in children with ASD.