

Processes of task performance as measured by the Assessment of Motor and Process Skills (AMPS): A predictor of work-related outcomes for adults with schizophrenia?

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Introduction: Researchers have identified a lack of standardized assessment tools with robust methodological qualities to assess work capacities of people with a severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia. Reviewed papers underlined the importance of: (1) functional evaluations as part of the work capacity evaluation; (2) situational assessments as relevant and useful methods in determining the vocational potential of this population; and (3) the premorbid functioning status as a consistent predictor of employment for these clients. Within this context, occupational therapists can play a key role in addressing this lack of work capacity evaluations for people with schizophrenia.

Objectives: A pilot study was undertaken to determine if the Assessment of Motor and Process Skills (AMPS), a functional, situational assessment tool specifically designed for occupational therapists, could discriminate the level of employment of people with schizophrenia and predict their work outcomes. A secondary objective was to examine whether personal causation, values, interests, roles, habits, and perceived environment contributed to maintaining work performance of this population.

Methods: Twenty adults with schizophrenia who were engaged either in competitive employment, supported employment, prevocational training, or non-vocational activities, participated in this exploratory study. Each completed the AMPS, the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS), the Addiction Severity Index (ASI), and the Worker Role Interview (WRI).

Results: Analysis revealed a moderate correlation between the level of employment and the global scores of the process skills scale in the AMPS. Results also showed strong significant correlations between the employment level and personal causation and roles domains of the WRI.

Conclusion / Contribution: This should be seen as preliminary evidence that beyond the basic cognitive functions, processes of task performance may also be a predictor of work-related outcomes for this population. Therefore, a situational assessment developed for occupational therapists, such as the AMPS, could be a critical adjunct to neuropsychological assessment data in predicting "real-world" performance and could assist occupational therapists working with this population to set realistic goals for their vocational rehabilitation. Findings also highlighted the importance for occupational therapists to consider personal causation and worker roles when assessing the work capacities of these clients.