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Work Skills Questionnaire for people with high functioning autism spectrum disorders (HFASD)

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Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is typically diagnosed in early childhood, and has a life-long course. Individuals with ASD and especially those with high functioning Autism (HFASD) can work successfully in community businesses, as evidence suggests. However, many persons with HFASD report substantial difficulties in finding and maintaining employment. They have difficulties in social and communication skills, and tend to insist on sameness. These characteristics cumulatively contribute to vocational barriers. Therefore, a comprehensive assessment was developed for employment of people with Autism, Work Skills Questionnaire (WSQ).

Objectives

- 1) To establish internal consistency reliability of the WSQ areas,
- 2) To provide standards of the WSQ for HFASD.
- 3) To establish criterion validity for WSQ comparing it to a general measure of career choice the Holland's Self-Directed Search (SDS).

Methods

Participants include 60 Individuals, ages of 18-40 years, who are diagnosed as HFASD with at least 10-12 years of education in transition from an educational setting to employment or are or were employed already.

Instruments

- 1) The WSQ areas addresses personal and educational data, employment history, habits, styles and independent work, work related strengths and weaknesses, past work barriers, preferred physical and social environment, routine daily activities, interpersonal skills and future aims. It is administered as a structured interview.
- 2) Holland's career intervention Self-Directed Search (SDS) Internet Version provides for the on-line administration of SDS Form R. This version of the general SDS-R form will be used in this study to provide partial criterion validity for the WSQ.
- 3) Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule -Generic (ADOS-G) will be used to define HFASD).

Results

The WSQ is ready in two languages- Hebrew and English. Content validity was established by expert qualitative evaluation in both languages, and was proven to be high. Data analysis is in process. The presentation will provide results of reliability, validity and standards will be described.

Conclusions and Contributions to the practice/ evidence base of occupational therapy

This study will provide a comprehensive assessment of vocational related strengths and drawbacks of people with autism. It will enable occupational therapists to recommend an optimal job-person match for individuals with HFASD.