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Introduction to the Sensory Processing Measure (SPM)

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Introduction

For 45 years, occupational therapists have used parent questionnaires to obtain important information about a child's sensory-related behaviors in everyday life. From this clinical legacy, the Sensory Processing Measure (SPM) (Parham et al., 2007) was developed to provide reliable and valid questionnaire scores.

Objectives of the Sensory Processing Measure

1. Provide reliable and valid parent and teacher questionnaire scores.
2. Discern whether sensory problems contribute to occupational difficulties in school, community, or home.
3. Determine whether child behavior is perceived very differently by parents versus teachers.

Methods

The SPM consists of two standardized questionnaires designed to contribute information about a child's behavior in everyday home or school settings, in order to aid the therapist in determining whether the child's daily occupations are affected by sensory integration problems. Two major forms are available in English: a Home Form for parents (Parham & Ecker, 2007) and a Main Classroom Form for the child's primary teacher (Miller-Kuhaneck, Henry, & Glennon, 2007).

Results

The SPM provides reliable and valid standard scores for sensory systems, praxis, and social participation in home and school. Scoring also indicates whether behavior is significantly different in home versus school, based on normative data from over 1,000 children.

Conclusion

The SPM is useful in assessment of children who may have sensory integration problems affecting participation in everyday occupations.

Contribution to occupational therapy practice

The SPM allows the therapist to determine whether sensory problems affect social participation, and whether the child functions differently in home versus school. Translators must obtain written permission from the publisher before beginning the translation process, and then SPM questions should be carefully checked and revised for cultural relevance prior to initiating a back-translation.