



Assessment of Functional Impairment in Children: A Critical Target for Evaluation

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Relevant Disclosure

- I have developed tests marketed by Multi- Health Systems, Pro-Ed and Western Psychological Services including the Rating Scales of Impairment (MHS).
- I have authored books marketed by Springer, Wiley, Guilford, Double Day, McGraw Hill, Brookes, Kluwer and Specialty Press. These include the Handbook Of Impairment First and Second Editions (Springer).
- I am Editor in Chief of the Journal of Attention Disorders (Sage) and Co-Editor of the Encyclopedia of Child Development (Springer).

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Today's Learning Objectives

Why evaluate impairment?

Overview of the conceptual bias of impairment

Define Impairment

What is the relationship between impairment and symptoms/ diagnoses

Review the data

Discuss the clinical implications

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We Are the First Congress on Defining Mental Illness (circa 1820)



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How Do We Understand, Define And Categorize Mental Illness?



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How Shall We Understand, Define, Categorize and Evaluate Treatment Response in Mental Illness?

- By etiology or cause?
- By emotions, behaviors and thoughts?
- By impaired function in activities of life?

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Define symptoms?

Meet eligibility criteria?

What is the Goal of a Comprehensive Evaluation?

Identify strengths and weaknesses?

Set baselines?

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**Why is the assessment of
impairment critical to a
comprehensive
evaluation?**

**Why is direct observation
so critical for child
assessment?**



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The relationship
between symptoms and
functioning remains
unexpectedly weak and
often bidirectional



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Clinicians are faced with emerging needs to...

- demonstrate the impact psychological and psychiatric diagnoses have on children and adults
- Measure impairment when using the DSM-5 or the ICD
- Navigate the increasing requirement to measure impairment effectively



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There is an increasing need to demonstrate functional impairment as part of a diagnostic process for medical, mental health, and even educational conditions




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BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

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Problems Of Defining Impairment

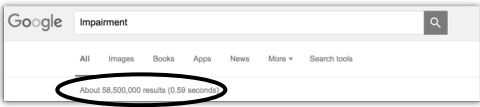


No consistent agreement on a definition of impairment

Researchers are advocating to expand the understanding of impairment in the diagnostic process **BUT** progress in clinical practice is slow

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As interest in impairment rises, so too do the number of resources available




How can we sort through all the research?

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What Do The Associations Say?



The DSM- 5 heavily emphasizes the role of impairment over and above symptom presentation



The term “functional impairment” is a concept that easily equates with disability in the World Health Organization’s International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

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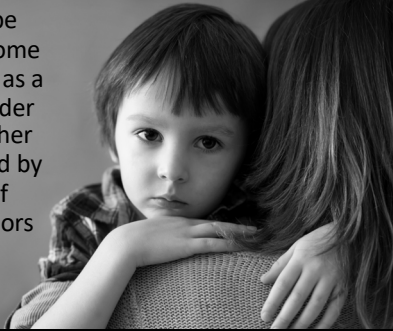
What Does The Research Say?



- Patients who do not meet specific symptom criteria may be **just as impaired** and disrupted as the lives of individuals who meet various criteria
- Many who may meet symptom count for a specific diagnosis may not be significantly impaired
- It's not surprising that in both the DSM-IV-TR and DSM-5 a requirement of significant impairment is noted in more than **70%** of the disorders listed as a criterion for diagnosis

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Impairment can be viewed as the outcome of a risk factor such as a psychological disorder interacting with other variables manifested by a constellation of measurable behaviors



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What Does It Mean To "Be Impaired"?



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Let's Break It Down Further

- Variables within the family, community and broader culture may insulate or contribute to impairment
- Some symptoms in an algorithm model are more potent than others in predicting impairment
- At certain ages, gender may differentially affect the expression of some symptoms and the severity of functional impairment
- Impairment is also very clearly not appreciated on a linear continuum

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Other Factors To Be Aware Of

- The relationship of a particular condition to levels of impairment is also not evenly distributed across a bell curve.
- Socioeconomic and minority status factors may impact the severity of impairment experienced
- Certain conditions may cause more or less impairment in certain settings

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Impairment is the reduced ability to meet the demands of life because of a psychological, physical, or cognitive condition



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Symptoms?	Severity?	Situation?
How do we define...		
Adaptive behavior?	Disorder?	Disability?

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Symptoms vs. Impairment



Inattention

vs.



Difficulty completing homework

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Two More Factors To Consider

Severity

- Degree
- Intensity
- Perception
- Frequency
- Suffering
- Duration

Situation

- Context
- Instance
- Set of demands
- Moment to moment experience
- Setting

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Adaptive Behavior vs. Impairment



Using utensils

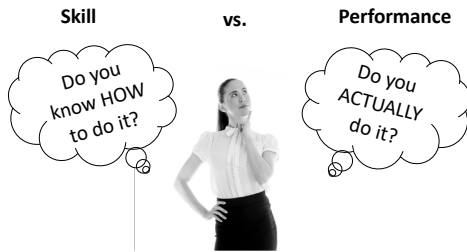
vs.



Not using utensils to eat

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Adaptive Behavior Measures vs. Impairment



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What Is A Disorder?

- ☐ A political phenomenon
- ☐ A collection of symptoms
- ☐ A deviation from the norm
- ☐ A disease
- ☐ A group of symptoms that significantly impairs functioning
- ☐ A subjective condition
- ☐ A collection of objective signs

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What Is A Disability?

- ☐ A perceived inability to perform daily functions
- ☐ Persistent
- ☐ Legislated
- ☐ Sociopolitical
- ☐ Mental, physical or emotional
- ☐ Cultural

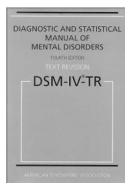
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IDEIA Defines Disability As...

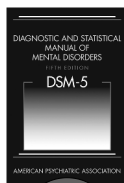
A child with an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities

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Assessing Impairment In The Eligibility Process



Global
Assessment of
Functioning
(GAF) Scale



Global
Assessment of
Functioning
(GAF) Scale



(Currently only for Adults)

IDEA
Individuals with
Disabilities Act


(Revised as IDEA in 2004)

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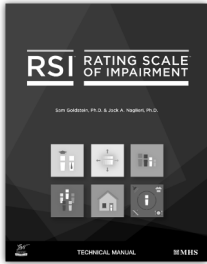


There is a valid and
reliable way to assess
Impairment.

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Key Features Of The RSI



- Fast** completion time
- Age-appropriate** items
- Assess youth ages **5 to 18 years**
- Large representative **normative** sample
- Assess impairment clearly **regardless of the diagnosis**

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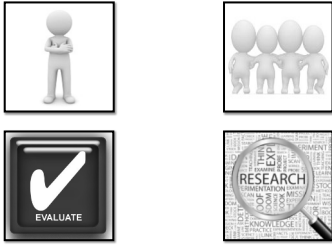
Key Features Of The RSI



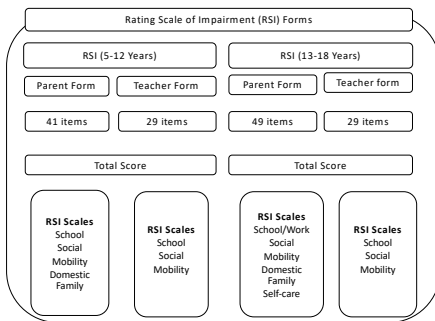
- Available in **Spanish**
- Monitor **progress** across time
- Satisfies the impairment criteria of the **DSM-5**
- Multiple raters** for a more accurate assessment
- Assist in forming intervention and **treatment planning**
- Aligned with **WHO's** domains of functioning found in **ICF**

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Uses For The RSI

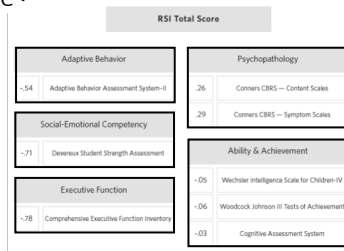


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Relationship Between The RSI And Other Measures



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Relationship Between The RSI And Other Impairment Measures

- RSI and the Barkley Functional Impairment Scale (BFIS-CA)
 - Child Sample corrected $r = .55$ to $.67$
 - Youth Sample corrected $r = .63$ to $.71$
- RSI and the Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS)
 - Corrected $r = -.34$ to $-.51$



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Directions On The RSI

Child's Name/ID: Page 2

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each statement that follows the phrase, "During the past four weeks, how often has your child..." then circle the letter under the word that tells how often you saw the behavior. Read each question carefully, then mark how often you saw the behavior in the past four weeks. Answer every question without skipping any. If you want to change your answer, put an X through it and circle your new choice. Be sure to answer every question.

During the past four weeks, how often has your child...

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often Always

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Conclusions

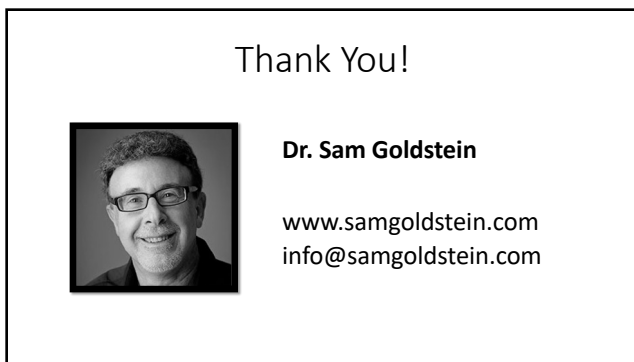
- Impairment can be defined and measured in children.
- Functional impairment can be accurately measured with an instrument like the Rating Scale of Impairment.
- The RSI offers the first valid, reliable comprehensive measure of daily functional challenges within a factor analyzed framework built on the WHODAS categories.
- Impairment is a unique phenomenon beyond symptoms, test scores and diagnoses.
- Assessment of and treatment monitoring of impairment offers an important advance in assessment.



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