

Title: The Assessment of Communication and Interaction Skills (ACIS): Measurement Properties

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Major Finding: The ACIS demonstrates internal, construct, and person response validity and can effectively measure people with varying levels of abilities.

Participants:

- 52 raters – Occupational therapists trained in the ACIS protocol during 2-day workshop
- 117 subjects
 - Age: 16-87 years. Mean: 43 years.
 - Diagnoses: 33 schizophrenia, 26 learning disability, 24 depression, 33 other psychosocial diagnoses, 1 well
 - Settings: inpatient and outpatient psychiatric and physical facilities

Method: Each rater rated one videotaped subject, then observed and rated subjects in either one or two social situations. A total of 244 ACIS observations were completed.

Analysis: Rasch analysis using FACETS software.

Findings:

- 19 of the 22 ACIS items had acceptable fit statistics, indicating that they represent a single construct. Construct validity of the ACIS is further supported by the arrangement of calibrated items in an order from easiest to hardest communication and interaction skills.
- All but one of the diagnostic groups had acceptable fit statistics, indicating that subjects were adequately measured by the ACIS. The ACIS skill items effectively discriminated clients into 6 levels of communication and interaction ability.
- 49 of the 52 raters used the ACIS in a consistent manner.
- All 12 of the social situations had acceptable fit statistics, indicating that the ACIS can be used in a variety of social situations.

Conclusion: This study provides evidence for the internal, construct, and person response validity of the ACIS. The ACIS is also able to discriminate different levels of communication and interaction skills. Therapists can use the ACIS in a consistent manner.

Implications for future research: Further research should be done to determine if reviewing the manual sufficiently prepares raters to use the ACIS reliably. Due to the small sample sizes in some of the diagnostic categories and social situations, additional data should be gathered to confirm the results with these groups and situations.

Evidence-based practice implications:

- **Therapists should consider the difficulty of specific social situations when assessing communication and interaction skills. Parallel group situations may be more appropriate when assessing clients with limited communication and interaction skills, and cooperative group social situations may be more appropriate when assessing clients with more communication and interaction skills.**
- **The ACIS is a valuable assessment that offers a structured method for observation, can easily be administered and scored, and can be interpreted in a valid manner to guide treatment planning.**

