

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS USING A MODIFIED SCHEDULE OF GROWING SKILLS.

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Abstract

Background

There are currently no specific guidelines for developmental surveillance of children with special needs undergoing intervention programmes. Studies have looked at shortfalls of current methods and have recommended the need for a more psychometrically sound and standardized method of assessment.

Aims and Methods

In order to determine the validity, specificity and sensitivity of a new developmental assessment method for children with special needs attending early intervention programmes, a cross-sectional study was conducted using a modified Schedule of Growing Skills (MSGs) developmental assessment tool which was compared with Denver Developmental Assessment (DDA). The Schedule of Growing Skills was modified to suit the local setting and is chosen because of its ability to score detailed milestone of the child.

Results

A total of 32 children enrolled in this study. The mean developmental age assessed by DDA was 31.33 (SD \pm 28.77) and mean developmental age achieved by MSGs was 22.63 (SD \pm 17.56). The association between MSGs and DDA showed an excellent correlation between the two measurements (Spearman's rho = 0.87, $p < 0.001$). Reliability statistical analysis (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.856-0.984) verified MSGs as an appropriate tool to be used for the developmental assessment. The sensitivity and specificity of MSGs in this study was observed to be 83.33% and 33.33% respectively, which was comparable with other developmental assessment tools.

Conclusion

This study provides preliminary data that implicates the usefulness of MSGs as a tool for assessment of developmental milestone for children with special needs. It also has the potential to be used as a tool for monitoring developmental milestone of children with special needs undergoing early intervention programme.