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SUBSTANTIATING THE NEED FOR FLUENCY ITEMS IN RATING SCALES

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Objective: Discuss and demonstrate the absence of fluency items on typically-used children’s rating scales; and demonstrate the association between the rating on a new fluency item and the child’s performance on psychoeducational measures of fluency.

Methods: The parents of a group of 36 children were administered a Likert scale item asking about excessive time needed to finish homework and assignments, regardless of the subject area involved. The rating of the new fluency item was compared to the contents of the Conners’ Rating Scales and correlations were determined. The rating on the new fluency item was also compared to multiple measures of fluency from a comprehensive psychoeducational test battery.

Results: The new fluency item did not significantly correlate with any items or subscales on the Conners’ Rating Scales, confirming that none of the items or subscales of the Conners’ scales directly or indirectly measure the fluency construct reflected by this new item. The new fluency item correlated significantly with a composite of two academic fluency measures: the composite measure of the Reading Fluency subtest and the Math Fluency subtest of the Woodcock Johnson-III Achievement.

Conclusions: The implications of these findings are important in suggesting that a single rating scale item, perhaps added to an existing scale, can aid clinicians in determining if further neuropsychological assessment is warranted of deficits in academic fluency, which if present may qualify a child for school services, extended time for standardized testing, and other academic adaptations aimed at assisting the struggling student.

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