

The use of brief child behavior assessments for weekly check-ins in



PCIT: WACB-N and WACB-P

Lindsay A. Forte, Deanna K. Boys, and Susan G. Timmer
UC Davis Children's Hospital: CAARE Diagnostic and Treatment Center

Contact: lindsay.forte@ucdmc.ucdavis.edu

A PARTNER IN
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The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

ABSTRACT

- In order to comply with the spirit of Sheila Eyberg's protocol for measuring child behavior problems weekly, but avoid the problems of regularly administering the ECBI, we developed a Brief Child Behavior Inventory measuring negative affect (WACB-N) and one measuring positive affect (WACB-P).
- This study examines the psychometric properties of those two measures: their ability to measure change over the course of treatment, and correlations between initial WACB scores with scores on pre-treatment ECBI and PSI-Short Forms.
- Results showed that over time, parents completing the WACB-N report a significant decrease in their children's negative behaviors; and parents completing the WACB-P report a significant increase in their child positive behaviors. As hypothesized, we found that the WACB-N was positively correlated with the ECBI and PSI-SF, while the WACB-P was negatively correlated with those measures, suggesting that these measures measured the dimensions of behavior that we intended.
- The implications of these findings support the use of the WACB-N and/or the WACB-P as an efficient, cost effective weekly assessment measuring child behavior over time.

INTRODUCTION

- Sheila Eyberg's PCIT International protocol calls for the use of a weekly ECBI. ECBI assessments are costly for providers, the weekly time commitment (36 questions; 10 minutes for good readers) can be tedious and takes away valuable clinical check-in time, and completing the assessment weekly may diminish its reliability (Ahava et al., 1998).
- One solution to this problem is to administer a shortened child behavior inventory weekly. Nine categories of behavior have been identified as effectively measuring child behavior over time, as determined by the UC Davis CAARE Center and taken from the ECBI (Forte et al., 2011). We have created an assessment measure using one question per category (9 total questions). This brief Weekly Assessment of Child Behavior is a cost effective, time efficient, easy solution to administer during check-in.
- The ECBI measures the presence of negative behaviors. We developed a short version of the ECBI, the WACB-N to mirror its findings. However, in order to help parents perceive their children's positive behaviors, with the help of "ECBI Coaching Words" we also developed a brief child behavior inventory using the positive opposites of the WACB-N questions, and called this the WACB-P. The WACB-P, as a measure asking parents to rate positive behaviors, may "prime" them to pay attention to those behaviors in the treatment session, which would serve an important clinical assessment purpose.

PURPOSE

- The purpose of this study is to determine whether the two measures, the WACB-N and the WACB-P, reliably assess children's behavior, whether or not they are measuring opposite views of the same underlying factor, and whether they are sensitive enough to measure change over time.

HYPOTHESIS

- The WACB-N will be positively correlated with the ECBI, and scales on the PSI-SF, showing that high levels of risk shown on the ECBI and PSI-SF will be reflected in high frequencies of problem behaviors on the WACB-N.
- The WACB-P will be negatively correlated with the ECBI and PSI-SF scales, showing that high levels of risk shown on the ECBI and PSI-SF will be reflected in low levels of positive behaviors on the WACB-P.
- From the first WACB-N to the last one given for each parent-child dyad, scores will decrease. From the first WACB-P to the last one given for each parent-child dyad, scores will increase.

METHOD

Participants

- Children referred to Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) for disruptive behaviors; 36 parent-child dyads were administered the WACB-N before every treatment session, and 29 were administered the WACB-P weekly.
- All dyads completed Pre-Treatment PSI-SFs and ECBI, regardless of WACB form administered.
- The sample for this study was ethnically diverse. The dyads completing WACB-N assessments had 67% male children participating in treatment, while the dyads completing WACB-P assessments had 67.5% male children participating in treatment (see Table 1 for complete demographics).

Measures

- The Parent Stress Inventory Short Form (PSI-SF) is a standardized parent-report form used to identify parent-child dyads experiencing stress and at risk for developing parenting and child behavior problems. This assessment measures 4 main scales: parental distress, parent-child dysfunction, difficult child, and total stress.
- The Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI) is a 36-item scale that measures common disruptive behavior problems exhibited by children aged 2 to 16 years.
- Dr. Nancy Zebell of the CAARE Center collapsed the 36 items on the ECBI into 9 clinically meaningful categories, as shown by Forte et al., 2011. Using these 9 categories, we developed the 9 WACB-N items, constructing it similarly to the ECBI, with an intensity scale and a problems scale.
- The WACB-P was developed using the positive opposites of the 9 questions used on the WACB-N, in order to capture parental perception of child positive behaviors. Like the WACB-N, the WACB-P was constructed with an intensity scale and a problems scale.

RESULTS

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

| Demographics | | WACB-N | WACB-P |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Sex of Child | % Boys | 67 | 67.5 |
| | % Bio Father | 8.3 | 15 |
| | % Bio Mother | 63.9 | 62.5 |
| | % Mother's Partner | 2.8 | 2.5 |
| Caregiver Relationship | % Aunt | 2.8 | 0 |
| | % Grandfather | 0 | 2.5 |
| | % Grandmother | 0 | 5 |
| | % Foster Father | 8.3 | 7.5 |
| | % Foster Mother | 11.1 | 2.5 |
| | % Adoptive Mother | 2.8 | 2.5 |
| Caregiver Ethnicity | % Caucasian | 27.8 | 30 |
| | % African American | 19.4 | 25 |
| | % Latino | 33.3 | 17.5 |
| | % Other | 19.4 | 27.5 |
| Mean Child Age (SD) | | 5.15 (1.26) Range: 2.9 – 7.6 | 5.26 (1.56) Range: 2.86 – 8.4 |

Table 2: WACB Correlations with Measures and Scales

| | WACB-N Intensity Scale | WACB-P Intensity Scale |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| ECBI Intensity Scale | .844* | -.741* |
| PSI-SF Parental Distress Scale | .378* | -.028* |
| PSI-SF Parent-Child Dysfunction Scale | .603* | -.608* |
| PSI-SF Difficult Child | .731* | -.626* |

WACB-N and WACB-P Scores Over Time



RESULTS cont.

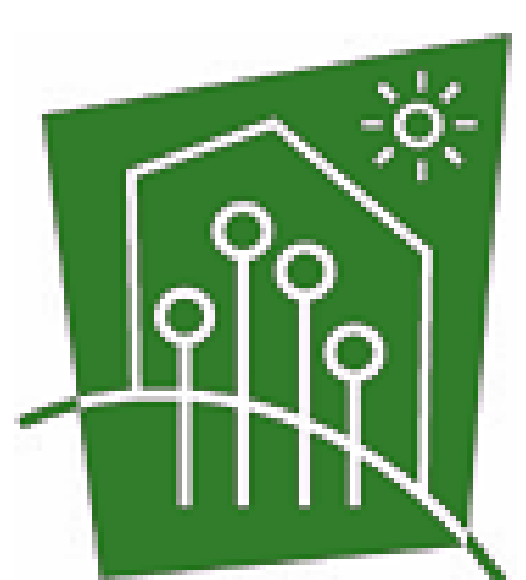
- The WACB-N was positively correlated with the ECBI, and the Parental Distress, Parent-Child Dysfunction, and Difficult Child scales on the PSI-SF (See Table 2).
- The WACB-P was negatively correlated with the ECBI, and the Parental Distress, Parent-Child Dysfunction, and Difficult Child scales on the PSI-SF (See Table 2).
- Scores on the WACB-N decreased significantly from the first to the last assessment given (See line graph).
- Scores on the WACB-P increased significantly from the first to the last assessment given (See line graph).

DISCUSSION

- The purpose of this study was to examine the usefulness of two brief child behavior inventories (one negative and one positive) in measuring parental perception of child behavior at a weekly check-in, thus helping clinicians track child behavior over time and design more specific PCIT treatment goals.
- Results of analyses of the WACB-N showed that it was significantly and positively correlated with the ECBI intensity scale and child related scales on the PSI-SF, suggesting that the WACB-N is measuring similar parental perceptions of their children's disruptive behaviors.
- Results of analyses of the WACB-P showed that it was negatively correlated with the ECBI intensity scale and child related scales on the PSI-SF, suggesting that the WACB-P, designed to draw parents' attention to their children's positive behavior, also reflects the absence of disruptive behavior.
- Analyses investigating whether the WACB-N and WACB-P were sensitive enough measures to capture change in behaviors from week to week confirmed our hypotheses, suggesting that both assessments can be used to illustrate for parents the success of the treatment – that their children's behaviors are improving.
- The findings of this study support the use of the WACB-N and/or the WACB-P to track child behavior on a weekly basis and develop clinically meaningful treatment goals.

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

- The results of this study support the use of the WACB-N and/or the WACB-P as a weekly assessment tool to track child behavior over time and help the therapist identify the progress of ongoing treatment goals.



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