

Brief Problem Monitor: Psychometric Properties in a Spanish Clinical Sample

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Background

The Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment instruments (ASEBA), in its forms: Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), Teacher's Report Form (TRF) and Youth Self-Report (YSR), are widely used for the assessment of general psychopathology in children and adolescents, both in research and clinical settings. In 2011, Achenbach et al. presented a brief screening measure based on the ASEBA forms, the Brief Problem Monitor (BPM). Same as the previous ASEBA forms, the BPM is applied as a questionnaire, rated from 0 to 2; and has three forms for different informants: parent/ caregiver (BPM-P), teacher (BPM-T), and youth (BPM-Y). The final version consists of 19 items (see table I) for the caregiver and youth forms, and 18 for the teacher form; requiring only a 2 minute application.

Objective

To establish the psychometric properties of the BPM in Spanish clinical sample.

Methods

A sample of 1942 children aged 6 to 18 years old (see table II) was randomly drawn from a clinical database. Cronbach's alpha was performed as a reliability measure for the ASEBA and BPM scales; then correlation analysis between original and abbreviated scales. Standardized multiple regression analysis determined the variance explained by BPM items.

Table II. Sample description

	Total	CBCL	TRF	YSR
<i>n</i> (%)	1940	1294 (66.7)	266 (13.7)	380 (19.6)
Girls (%)	739 (38.1)	495 (38.3)	72 (27.1)	172 (45.3)
Year of registry (%)				
2009		262 (20.2)	17 (6.4)	28 (7.4)
2010		286 (22.1)	83 (31.2)	42 (11.1)
2011		130 (10.0)	48 (18.0)	26 (6.8)
2012		216 (16.7)	20 (7.5)	84 (22.1)
2013		261 (20.2)	50 (18.8)	122 (32.1)
2014		139 (10.7)	48 (18.0)	78 (20.5)
Age in years: Mean ± SD		10.5 ± 3.2	9.3 ± 2.7	14.0 ± 1.9
Age range		6 - 18	6 - 17	11 - 18

Note. BPM: Brief Problem Monitor; CBCL: Child Behavior Checklist; TRF: Teacher's Report Form; YSR: Youth Self Report.

Results

As can be seen in table III, internal consistency of the BPM was acceptable-to-good; with Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.77 for parents (BPM-P), 0.79 for teachers (BPM-T) and 0.76 for youth (BPM-Y). Best reliability was reported for the Externalizing scales of the BPM-T (0.93), then BPM-P (0.89) and BPM-Y (0.82). Internalizing scales were second best, with 0.85 for the BPM-P and BPM-Y, and 0.81 for the BPM-T. Attention scale of the BPM scored slightly inferior (0.66 to 0.73).

Pearson's correlation coefficient (table IV) was acceptable for the broadband scales Internalizing (0.80 to 0.85); Externalizing (0.80 to 0.88); Attention (0.77 to 0.83); and Total scales (0.82 to 0.88). Narrowband scales showed more heterogeneity; with best scores for the Anxious-Depressed scale (0.82 to 0.91) and the Aggression scale (0.85 to 0.90). BPM items explained 81% to 89% of the variance of the ASEBA subscales.

Table III. Cronbach's alpha scores for the ASEBA scales and their corresponding version of the BPM

	Parent	Teacher	Youth
<i>n</i>	1294	266	380
Internalizing			
Original scale	0.85	0.82	0.85
Brief scale	0.69	0.72	0.72
Externalizing			
Original scale	0.89	0.93	0.82
Brief scale	0.77	0.84	0.64
Attention			
Original scale	0.75	0.77	0.68
Brief scale	0.67	0.73	0.66
Total BPM	0.77	0.79	0.76

Note. ASEBA: Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment forms; BPM: Brief Problem Monitor.

Table IV. Pearson's correlation coefficients between BPM scales and their corresponding CBCL, TRF, and YSR broadband and narrowband scales

ASEBA scales	BMP-Parent	BPM-Teacher	BPM-Youth
INTERNALIZING	0.80	0.83	0.85
Anxiety-Depression	0.88	0.86	0.91
Withdrawal	0.58	0.61	0.66
Somatic	0.35	0.35	0.42
EXTERNALIZING	0.88	0.90	0.80
Rule-Breaking	0.61	0.75	0.46
Aggression	0.90	0.92	0.85
Attention	0.77	0.84	0.79
Total 0.86	0.91	0.82	

Note. ASEBA: Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment forms; BPM: Brief Problem Monitor.

Conclusions

- These results show preliminary support for good validity and reliability of the Spanish version of Brief Problem Monitor on a clinical sample.
- BPM can be recommended as a good abbreviation of the ASEBA.

Table I. BPM items

- Acts too young for his/her age
- Argues a lot
- Fails to finish things he/she starts
- Can't concentrate, can't pay attention for long
- Can't sit still, restless, or hyperactive
- Destroys things belonging to his/her family or others
- Disobedient at home
- Disobedient at school
- Feels worthless or inferior
- Impulsive or act without thinking
- Too fearful or anxious
- Feels too guilty
- Self-conscious or easily embarrassed
- Inattentive or easily distracted
- Stubborn, sullen or irritable
- Temper tantrums or hot temper
- Threatens people
- Unhappy, sad, or depressed
- Worries

References

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