

GO4KIDDS, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

Socioeconomic Status (SES) is an important variable in health and psychosocial research generally. Emerson and colleagues (2006) showed that families supporting children with Developmental Disabilities (DD) were found to have lower SES than families with typically developing children, and this was related to lower levels of wellbeing. The Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status (BSMSS) is an updated measure of SES, based on Hollingshead's (1975) research that utilizes a recent list of occupations (Barratt, 2012). This measure was originally intended for use with young adults and takes into account the education and occupation of the participant and his/her mother, father, and spouse. The BSMSS has been adapted for this study for use with parents of children with DD by utilizing only the parent scores. To our knowledge, no one has examined this measure in relation to other indicators of SES, such as income. Although the BSMSS includes a more up to date list of occupations, subjective judgments are required during scoring. This poster aims to examine the BSMSS, by looking at its components, and comparing it to other measures of SES: Hollingshead and Median Income. As immigrant families have made a transition to a new society, and indicators of SES may not hold the same meaning (Fulgini & Yoshikawa, 2010), we will also examine whether the relationship is different for immigrant families, and those in rural and sub/urban areas of Canada.

Background

- Socioeconomic Status (SES) is an important variable in health and psychosocial research
 - In general, SES has been shown to be a predictor of premature mortality (Adler et al., 1993) and is related to mental health problems (Dohrenwend et al., 1992)
 - Families of children with Developmental Disabilities (DD) report lower SES than families of typically developing children (Emerson, 2003)
 - There are a number of ways of operationalizing SES:
 - Traditional Four-Factor Hollingshead scale (Hollingshead, 1975), based on research conducted in 1960's, calculated SES using:
 - Marital Status
 - Gender
 - Education
 - Occupation
 - Outdated, many current occupations not included
 - The Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status (Barratt, 2012) based on Hollingshead's scale (1975), uses education and occupation
 - Measure more up-to-date than Hollingshead (1975), but unexamined
 - Designed for young adults, originally including scores for self, spouse, mother and father
 - Adapted for this poster by only including parent scores
 - Median Income for residential area
 - Median annual household income for residential area obtained from Canadian Census
 - Based on postal code
- There is little consensus on the best way to measure SES

Method

•The sample for this poster is a combined sample which comes from file review data from various previous studies in our lab and from Great Outcomes for Kids Impacted by Severe Developmental Disabilities (GO4KIDDS), which is a Canadian team project exploring the health, well-being, and social inclusion of school aged children with Severe DD and that of their parents

Participants

- N = 475
- child with DD age: 2-21 years (M=7.7, SD=3.9), 384 boys (81%), 89 girls (19%), 2 unreported
- 390 diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (83%)

Research Objectives

- 1) Examine the Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status components and Total
 - a) Hollingshead (available for a subset of data)
 - b) Median Income of residential area
- 2) Examine the relationships between these measures of SES for differences in:
 - a) immigrants (living in Canada ≤12 years) and Non-immigrants/long term residents (living in Canada > 12 years)
 - b) Canadians living in rural and sub/urban areas of Canada

Measures

Adapted version of The Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status (Barratt, 2012)

- Updated measure of SES based on Hollingshead's (1975) research
- Originally intended for older individuals; we have adapted it for use with children and their families
- Calculates scores based on education and occupation of parents (calculated for one or two parent households)
- Scores can range from 8 to 66
- Median household income of residential area (Statistics Canada, 2006)
 - Uses Forward Sortation Area of postal code (first 3 digits of Canadian postal code)
 - Median income for the people residing in a geographic area can be obtained from census data
- Traditional Four-Factor Hollingshead scale (Hollingshead, 1975)
 - Score based on marital status, gender, educational attainment and occupational prestige

Results (Cont'd)

Research Objective 3:

a) Immigrant Status

Using the Fisher r-to-z transformation to compare correlations across groups, the relationships among SES measures were similar in the two subgroups of immigrants and non-immigrants/long term residents

b) Residing in different areas of Canada

Using the Fisher r-to-z transformation to compare correlations across groups, the relationships among SES measures were similar in the two subgroups of participants residing in rural areas of Canada and sub/urban areas of Canada.

Discussion

- The two components of the Barratt, education and occupation, are moderately correlated with each other ($r = .45$)
- Occupation is more strongly correlated with the total than Education ($r = .97$ vs. $r = .61$)
 - The total score is better than the individual parts, but, if anything, occupation is better
- Barratt is moderately related to Hollingshead categories ($r_s = .55$), but with great variability in Barratt scores within each Hollingshead category
 - Barratt has advantage of being a continuous variable as opposed to a categorical score, more useful for statistical purposes
- Median income of residential area is only weakly related to Barratt ($r = .13$, $p = .02$)
 - Based on the results from this study, median income may not be a useful indicator of SES (when SES is conceptualized as educational/occupational attainment)
 - Actual family income may be useful (but not available in this sample)

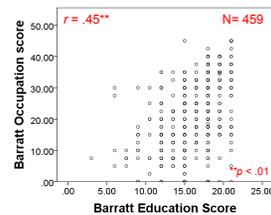
• Greater refinement is needed in the conceptualization and measurement of Socioeconomic Status, as different indicators do not always agree, so additional research is warranted in different samples and with additional SES indicators

• In the meantime, the Barratt seems to be a useful measure, especially for applied research: it can be coded reliably; it provides continuous scores, useful for statistical analyses; it correlates well with at least some other indicators of SES; it seems to perform similarly in subgroups who are immigrants (vs. not) and who live in different size communities

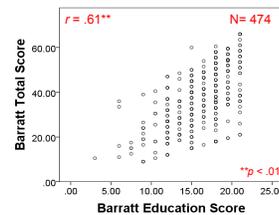
Results

Research Objective 1:

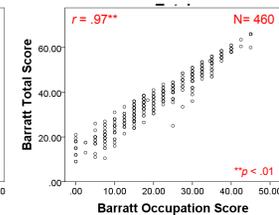
Barratt Education and Occupation



Barratt Education and Total

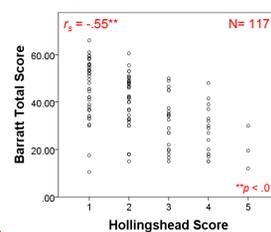


Barratt Occupation and Total

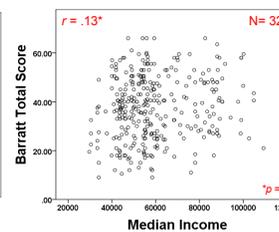


Research Objective 2:

a) Barratt and Hollingshead



b) Barratt and Median Income



Reliability of the Barratt

- Some judgment is required in categorizing occupations
- Sample of 33 cases were independently coded by the first author
- $r = .93$
- Represents excellent inter-rater reliability

Acknowledgments

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