Clinical Interpretation of “Use of the Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency in Occupational Therapy”

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Wilson, Polatajko, Kaplan, and Faris (1995) provide a useful overview of the Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency (BOTMP). Having read this article, I will use the BOTMP with increased confidence in my initial assessment of children with mild motor problems. The description of a performance profile for children with mild motor problems is a helpful assessment guideline, especially in these times of expected greater efficiency and accountability.

The information that the authors provide concerning the Response Speed test (low test-retest reliability, large standard error of measurement (SEM), and poor discriminative ability) confirms my clinical suspicion that a child’s performance on this test has less to do with motor ability than with factors such as the child’s attention-to-task or test setup.

The Balance subtest appears to have similar limitations (low test-retest reliability, large SEM but strong discriminative ability). I have noted in my assessments of children referred with potential mild motor difficulties that a low balance score is sometimes not associated with functional problems as well as the reverse. I will certainly administer this test with increased care and also calculate (however painful) the SEM.

Given the authors description of the BOTMP as a limited instrument for evaluating change, I concur with their suggestion that functional outcome measures may be more useful. The time constraints of clinical practice require a significant benefit to justify the time it takes to readminister a standardized test. This time investment is not supported by the article. Setting specific functional objectives in collaboration with the child and family may provide a more efficient and valid measure of potential change.

I am pleased that the authors provide information immediately applicable to clinical practice.

Reference