Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)*

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PLEASE NOTE: The M-CHAT was not designed to be scored by the person taking it. In the validation sample, the authors of the M-CHAT scored all checklists. If parents are concerned, they should contact their child's physician .

Abstract

Autism, a severe disorder of development, is difficult to detect in very young children. However, children who receive early intervention have improved long-term prognoses. The Modified – Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M–CHAT), consisting of 23 yes/no items, was used to screen 1076 children. Thirty of 44 children given a diagnostic/developmental evaluation were diagnosed with a disorder on the autism spectrum. Nine items pertaining to social relatedness and communication were found to have the best discriminability between children diagnosed with and without autism/PDD. Cutoff scores were created for the best items and the total checklist. Results indicate that the M-CHAT is a promising instrument for the early detection of autism.

Background

The M-CHAT is an expanded American version of the original CHAT from the U.K. The M-CHAT has 23 questions using the original nine from the CHAT as its basis. Its goal is to improve the sensitivity of the CHAT and position it better for an American audience.

The M-CHAT has been steadily expanding its radius of usage in the state of Connecticut and surrounding New England states. Its authors are still collecting data on the initial study, awaiting final outcomes for sensitivity and specificity after the subjects return for their 3.5 year well-child visit by 2003. The authors have applied for funding of an expanded study on 33,000 children. The M-CHAT tests for autism spectrum disorders against normally developing children.

M-CHAT Scoring Instructions

A child fails the checklist when 2 or more critical items are failed OR when any three items are failed. Yes/no answers convert to pass/fail responses. Below are listed the failed responses for each item on the M-CHAT. Bold capitalized items are CRITICAL items.

Not all children who fail the checklist will meet criteria for a diagnosis on the autism spectrum. However, children who fail the checklist should be evaluated in more depth by the physician or referred for a developmental evaluation with a specialist.

1. No	6. No	11. Yes	16. No	21. No

2. NO	**7. NO**	12. No	17. No	22. Yes
3. No	8. No	**13. NO**	18. Yes	23. No
4. No	**9. NO**	**14. NO**	19. No	
5. No	10. No	**15. NO**	20. Yes	