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THE GAMSE (GRODBERG AUTISM MENTAL STATUS EXAMINATION). PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT OF A STANDARDIZED AUTISM-FOCUSED EXAM

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Background: The traditional mental status examination, used universally in psychiatry, does not provide flexibility to accommodate the developmental perspective necessary for the examination of patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Grodberg Autism Mental Status Examination (GAMSE), developed at the Seaver Autism Center for Research and Treatment, prompts the observation and recording of social, communicative and behavioral functioning in patients with ASD. The GAMSE contains 8 items, which produce a total score ranging from 0 to 16.

Objectives:

1. To determine the validity of the GAMSE in accurately predicting diagnostic classification based on a gold standard observational assessment.

2. To establish inter-rater reliability.

Methods: Eighty consecutive patients receiving autism diagnostic evaluations at the Seaver Autism Center were administered the GAMSE and the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) as part of standard intake procedures. The classification accuracy of the GAMSE was assessed using the ADOS as the gold standard. Inter-rater reliability on the GAMSE was also examined (n=44).

Results: A receiver-operating characteristic (ROC) curve analysis was used to determine a cut-off score based on the 8 items of the GAMSE. The most effective cut-off score of greater than or equal to 5 predicted outcome on the ADOS with a sensitivity of 0.94 and a specificity of 0.81. Co-rating of 44 participants on the AMSE resulted in an average measures intra-class correlation of 0.85.

Conclusions: Preliminary results indicate excellent classification accuracy and suggest that the GAMSE may act as a useful standardized autism assessment tool for clinical and research endeavors.