USE OF PSYCHOMETRIC INSTRUMENT IN DRUG SCREENING

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Abstract

In Malaysia, urine drug test kit have long been practiced as one of the methods of screening for student of high school detected by drugs. Nevertheless, the use of this kit can only be implemented with the cooperation of the National Drug Agency (AADK). There are many of psychometric testing tools used to detect drug abuse especially to identify widespread drug use problems. To overcome this problem, Substance Abuse Substance Screening Inventory for Adolescent (SASSI-A2) was used in this study. The selection of SASSI-A2 is due to several factors, among which is the Instrument is able to classify respondents in four, Low Probability (LP), Low Probability Further Action (LPFA), Substance Abuse Disorder (SAD) and Substance Dependence Disorder (SDD). SASSI-A2 is a brief screening tool designed to identify individuals who have a high probability of having a substance use disorder, including both substance abuse and substance dependence. SASSI-A2 comprises of 72 items that are rated on a two point scale with response; true and false. SASSI-A2 was translated into Malay language and it was refined through a back-translation technique. In addition, this instrument is also easy to administer and takes a short time and cost savings. Since its release in 2001, SASSI-A2 has been recognized in about 2,500 programs across the United States and Canada and is now being used in Malaysia.

Keywords: Drug Screening, Drug Abuse, High Risk, Psychometric Instrument

Introduction

To date, drugs have become a major threat to the country. Drug abuse is increasing in our country day by day involving multiple layers of society. The United Nations International Drug Control (UNDCP) lists Malaysia in the fifth place in Southeast Asia having the largest number of drug addicts. Various efforts have been undertaken by various parties, especially the government in addressing the problem of drug abuse. However, the rate of drug abuse involves lessening and increasing from time to time. The students are also not exempt from being one of the contributors to the rate of increase in drug abuse (Mahyudin & Azizah, 2011).

The problem of drug abuse among students, especially in the country, is a major problem that has always been the focus, especially the authorities. Based on the latest National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK) statistics in 2014, the number of students identified as being involved with drug addiction is as high as 622 people. Detected school children involved in drug abuse are as early as 13 years to 15 years with a total of 28 people followed by a group of students aged 16 years to 17 years old with a total of 206 people. It can be concluded that the increase in the number of students trapped in this problem along with the increase in their age when found to be 18-year-olds, the number of whom was detected with drug abuse problems was 388.

This is very worrying because at this age they are still in school. For example, in Kelantan, from 2014 to 2015 a total of 250 students as early as 12 years old were also detected by the drug. Most of them are comprised of high school students. A total of 5,200 students undergoing urine screening tests are those who are suspected of being involved with drugs. The types of drugs taken by the students were horse pills, heroin and ketum leaf water. The National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK) and the police have identified about 100 schools in the state to be closely monitored to combat drug symptoms among students.
In accordance with the goals of the Drug Free School Government 2012 and the Drug Free State 2015, various programs have been carried out at the school level. Among them is by applying Drug Prevention Education and establishing a Anti-Drug Badge Scheme team. All of them aim to instil drug hate among students (Ais, 2013). In order to curb drug abuse at school level, the AADK has conducted various prevention programs such as talks, exhibitions, and video shows. This prevention program also involves urine screening tests (AADK, 2008). Within 3 years (2013-2015), the number of students involved in the initial screening test was 117,562. Based on the test, on average, 3.35 percent of them were positive in the initial sieve. These pupils are closely monitored through school-level counseling processes, periodic meetings with their parents, and they are also required to attend the National Children's Intervention Camp (INTAN).

Screening for identifying drug use is by using a urine drug test kit. The use of this urine test kits can identify those involved in drug abuse. In Malaysia, this urine test kits are used to screen the pupils of high school detected using drugs. The use of this kit can only be implemented only with the cooperation of the National Drug Agency (AADK). To perform this urine test requires a high maintenance cost and this condition can not involve many students for screening.

Therefore, the school and the AADK will only focus on certain target groups such as low-achieving pupils, students with disciplinary problems and other risky students. However, overseas studies have shown that non-high-risk students also use drugs. The study by Kamarudin et al., (2010) also found that 0.52% pupils of Higher Education Institute (IPT) were involved in positive detection of drugs through urine testing including female students. Meanwhile, 3.35 per cent of 117,562 schoolchildren were found to be positively involved in the treatment of early screening of urine since 2013 until now. In addition to issues such as human rights, it is also necessary to take into account the implementation of the urine test screening. Taking specimens (urine) from individuals requires a lot of complicated processes. Failure to comply with the requirements of the specimen taking may cause the parties to be challenged in court.

**Substance Abuse Substance Screening Inventory (SASSI-A2)**

In order to address this issue, there are now a range of psychometric testing tools used to detect drug abuse such as 'Addiction Severity Index '(ASI; McLellan, Luborsky, Woody & O'Brien, 1980; McLellan et.al, 1992,' The Addiction Acknowledgment and Addiction Potential Scale '(AAS; APS; Weed, Butcher, McKenna, Ben-Porath, 1992), Drug Abuse Screening Test '(DAST; Skinner, 1982) and 'Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory ' (SASSI; ) is used primarily to identify the problem of drug use more widely. Hence, efforts should be made to ensure the suitability of psychometric instruments to be used in identifying students at risk for drug abuse. The use of this psychometric instrument enables more pupils to be screened compared to the urine test screen which takes time and cost.

SASSI-A2 gauge is a measuring tool that measures the probability of a person to engage with drug abuse, whether high or low. This measuring instrument has been proven effective even when individuals who are unable or unwilling to admit the relevant behavior, with the result of an overall accuracy of 94% (Miller, 1994).

The SASSI-A2 measuring device has 12 scales, two scales are derived from frequency-related question items and 10 scales are derived from right-wrong question items. Two frequency scales (FVA and FVOD) ask about how often a client has experience or a drug-related situation. While the right-wrong item consists of 10 scales on which the scales measure the risks of drug abuse in the family and the social environment (FRISK), the scale to identify attitudes and beliefs about alcohol and other drug use (ATT), measuring scale drug abuse symptoms (SYM), five substance abuse scans based on items unrelated to material abuse (OAT, SAT, DEF, SAM, COR) VALUE scale, Secondary Classification Scale (SCS) that helps distinguish between possibilities low or medium probability and so on to get involved with drug abuse.
In this study, researchers have chosen to use Substance Abuse Substance Screening Inventory for Adolescent (SASSI-A2). The selection of SASSI-A2 is due to several factors, among which is the Instrument to classify respondents in four namely Low Probability (LP), Low Probability Further Action (LPFA), Substance Abuse Disorder (SAD) and Substance Dependence Disorder (SDD) (Miller, 2000).

In addition, this instrument is also easy to administer and takes a short time and cost savings (Miller, 2000). The researchers also translate this instrument into various languages including Japanese (Kikuchi & Wada, 2000), Persian (Vahid, et al., 2009) Spanish (Lazowski, Boye, Miller & Miller, 2000) and other languages such as English to Malay (Hambleton & Jong, 2003) and used in cross-cultural contexts. Since its release in 2001, SASSI-A2 has been recognized in about 2,500 programs across the United States and Canada and is now being used in Malaysia.

Ajibade, Adeyemo, Adisa, & Ejidokun, (2015) have used SASSI instruments on their research samples. A total of 720 samples were randomly comprised of 360 male students and 360 female students consisting of various backgrounds. As a result, it is found that most students who are involved with drug abuse, their parents are civil servants. In addition, there are significant differences between students in high school who are sexually abusing drugs and students in urban areas are more likely to be involved with drug abuse than rural-grade students. While Carol (2001) states that there is no filtering tool to identify the perpetrators involved in domestic violence. Due to the widely used Substance Abuse Substance Screening Inventory -A3 (SASSI-A3) measure, he tried to use SASSI-A3 to test whether this measuring instrument could also be used as a filter tool for domestic violence offenders. This study compares the 150 males who commit malignancies with 75 male samples of non-violence. SASSI - A3 will determine whether there will be significant differences between the groups.

In addition, the SASSI-A2 gauge has also been tested on criminal offenders involving a total of 300 people in the sample of 200 people being monitored and 100 people waiting to undergo pre-trial. James (1998) in his study argues that more accurate validity is needed to test samples involving criminal offenses. Rogers, Cashel, Johansen, Sewell & Gonzalez (1997) tested the effectiveness of SASSI-A measurement tools on 317 male and female teenagers.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the psychometric tests used have a distinctive strength and are able to identify students involved in drug abuse as well as potentially trapped students. This psychometric test can also be used as an alternative or used in conjunction with a urine test screen. Thus, early prevention measures and intervention programs on drug abuse issues can be made before being trapped further.

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