Socially Desirable Response Set Measure
Hays, R. D., Hayashi, T., and Stewart, A. L.
1989

Description of Measure

Purpose

To evaluate respondent’s tendency to give socially desirable responses.

Conceptual Organization

The Socially Desirable Response Set Measure (SDRS-5) contains 5 items covering the most practical concerns of clinicians who rely on self-report data.

Item Origin/Selection Process

The items were drawn from the Marlowe-Crowne (MC) Form A (Reynolds, 1982), an 11-item short form measure developed from the 33-item Marlowe-Crowne Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Ten of the 11 items were used in correlation analyses. The five items with the highest item-to-total correlations were selected for the SDRS-5 (Hays, Hayashi, & Stewart, 1989).

Materials


Time Required

Less than one minute

Administration Method

Interviewer-administered

Training

Minimal

Scoring

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**Score Types**

Respondents rank each item on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Only the most extreme response is considered indicative of socially desirable responding. The 4-point response scale was created because it is often difficult for respondents to give true or false answers to this type of item.

Because only the most extreme response is considered indicative of socially desirable responding, the responses should be dichotomized in scoring. This will minimize incorrect classifications of borderline responses as socially desirable.

Hays, Hayashi, and Stewart (1989) linearly transformed scale scores to a 0-100 distribution so that they could be interpreted directly as proportions of the total possible score.

**Score Interpretation**

A higher total score indicates more socially desirable answers.

**Norms and/or Comparative Data**

The authors tested the instrument on a sample of 614 outpatients (mean age = 37 years; 56% female) who were participating in pilot studies for the Medical Outcome Study. The mean scale score in the first study, based on the 0-100 linear transformation of scores (see Score Types above), was 17.66 and the cross-validation sample score was 35.80 (Hays, Hayashi, & Stewart, 1989). The higher scores in the cross-validation sample may have occurred because of the lower degree of anonymity associated with participation in a longitudinal study as opposed to a cross-sectional study. The resulting SDRS-5 was then evaluated on a cross-validation sample of 3,053 patients (mean age: 47 years; 62% female) in the Medical Outcomes Study. The scale was more recently used in a patient adherence to treatment study (DiMatteo, Hays, Gritz, Bastani, Crane, Elashoff, Ganz, Heber, & McCarthy, 1993).

**Psychometric Support**

**Reliability**

Internal consistency reliability of the scale was acceptable for the two Hays studies (Cronbach’s alpha = .66 and .68 respectively) (Hays, Hayashi, & Stewart, 1989).
The reliability is nearly as high as the MC Form A (Reynolds, 1982) and approached lower bound estimates for the full 33-item Marlowe-Crown scale (Crino, Svobada, Rubenfield, & White, 1983).

**Validity**

No reports related to the validity of this measure could be found.

**LONGSCAN Use**

*Data Points*

Age 8

*Respondent*

Primary maternal caregiver

*Mnemonic and Version*

SDA

*Rationale*

Having a measure of respondents' tendency to provide socially desirable responses is useful for assessing the validity of participants' response sets. A socially desirable response set can be used as a control variable in multivariate statistical analyses. Because of the length of LONGSCAN’s battery of measures for caregivers, the brevity of the SDRS-5 made it a feasible measure to use.

*Administration and Scoring Notes*

The form was not modified in any way for LONGSCAN administration.

Scoring also followed the author’s procedure of dichotomizing the response values so as to maximize the validity of the measure and is as follows:

- Item 1: 1 = 1, all other values = 0
- Item 2: 5 = 1, all other values = 0
- Item 3: 5 = 1, all other values = 0
• Item 4: 5 = 1, all other values = 0
• Item 5: 1 = 1, all other values = 0

LONGSCAN did not linearly transform scores to the 1 to 100 distribution developed by Hays, Hayashi, and Stewart (1989). Thus, total scores on the measure range from 0 to 5.

Results
Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 displays the mean scores and score frequency by caregiver race and study site at the Age 8 interview. The average total score was approximately 2 for the entire LONGSCAN sample, indicating that respondents did not tend to give extremely socially desirable responses, thus lending credibility to the validity of participants’ response sets as a whole.

Based on mean total scores, Multiracial and Hispanic participants tended to give more socially desirable answers as did participants from the MW site.

Table 1 about here

Two-thirds of all respondents had total scores less than or equal to 2, and only 8.5% of all respondents had scores indicating extreme social desirability. White participants and participants of Other races had the greatest percentage of 0-scores, while Hispanic and respondents from Other races had the greatest percentage of 5-scores. Respondents at the SO site demonstrated the lowest social desirability scores and respondents at the MW site demonstrated the highest. High social desirability at the SW site may be due to the high number of foster caregivers.

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References and Bibliography

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Table 1. Mean total scores and total score frequency for Socially Desirable Response Set by Caregiver Race and Study Site. Age 8 Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1037</td>
<td>1.93 (1.62)</td>
<td>25.3 21.1 18.7 13.7 12.7 8.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>White</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>1.47 (1.38)</td>
<td>32.5 23.3 21.2 12.4 8.5 2.1</td>
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<td>Black</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>1.97 (1.62)</td>
<td>23.2 22.3 19.6 12.9 13.2 8.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.30 (1.84)</td>
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<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>29.2 8.3 20.8 12.5 16.7 12.5</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>2.12 (1.96)</td>
<td>29.4 23.5 0.0 17.7 11.8 17.7</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>235</td>
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<td>127</td>
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<td>SW</td>
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<td>NW</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1.62 (1.44)</td>
<td>27.2 26.7 19.5 14.5 7.7 4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. Based on data received at the LONGSCAN Coordinating Center through 8/24/01.