

Is the Basic Emotional Structuring Test a valid instrument for early identification of problematic coping styles and psychopathology in elementary school age children?

A Pilot Study



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Aim To validate the BEST for diagnosing coping style, and to assess prevalence of defined coping styles in children of adapted education compared to children of regular education at elementary school level.

Background Behavioral problems in elementary school age children are common. Not only the child, also fellow students, teachers and parents suffer discomfort because of these problems. Through early recognition and applying certain coping mechanisms, problem behaviors can be reduced, for instance by providing adjusted education. In practice, the diagnostic route for conditions such as ADHD and autism time-consuming, hindered by language skill problems, which causes impressive delays before children receive proper care and counseling.

Method Children with behavioral problems of a special educational school (C-SES) will be enrolled, and 100 children of a regular school (C-REG), between ages 6 and 11 years with written informed consent from their parents. Children were asked for verbal assent before assessment. The study was approved by the Institutional Ethical Committee (MEC-2012-458).

Socio-demographic data of both groups will be recorded. The psychological diagnoses of the C-SES will be compared to the BEST coping styles.

The test manual of the BEST (Calehr, 1989) was used to translate and complete information about choices of dolls. We used SPSS for Windows to perform the data analysis (version 21.0, Spss Inc., USA). The Chi-square test was used to compare differences in the two groups concerning test results from the BEST, additional support, etc. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0,05$ and a confidence interval of 95%.

Basic Emotional Structuring Test

This projective test, with ten colored dolls, is completed within minutes, and requires no language-related skills of child or parent.. The child is asked in this series of 10 dolls, to appoint

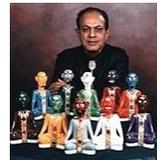
to the doll (or to call the figure of the doll) that most appeals (most sympathetic) and the least appealing (least sympathetic). The main coping style can be diagnosed from two dolls, pointed out by the child.



Discussion and recommendations

Psychopuncture, is a concept of classically stimulating acupoints with needles and moxa, but in resonance with the freudian Ego structures, having a powerfull action at psychic level during the acupuncture session. Furthermore, the BEST-coping style will be compared with regular psychological tests at elementary school students of adapted education.

Figure 1 Dr. Hallym Calehr, MD, PhD



The Super-ego is the way you deal with the outside world, your coping style

Results .. C-SES and 102 C-REG scholars enrolled the study. The results of this pilot study to test the feasibility and acceptability of the BEST are promising.

- The management commented positive in response to explanation, demonstration of and experiencing the test.
- Elementary school: 102 children been tested, and parent gave their informed consent.
- No child did not want to or could not pick
- In 96/102 C-REG, the test was executed within 2 minutes
- In evaluation, the teachers and management did not reported negative experiences by the tested children, or their parents.

