Child and Adult Behaviors Study
SMART 2006 Summer Fellowship Proposal

Chantelle Stacy
116 E. Adams St.
Plymouth, IN 46563

Student ID #0001955934
E-mail: ctobolsk@iusb.edu
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Introduction
In the field of psychology, there are many different measures used for assessing Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in adults. Initially, the measures used to identify symptoms of ADHD were worded in such a way that the disorder seemed to apply only to children, and many physicians were unaware that the disorder persisted in adults (Murphy, 2004). Identifying symptoms of ADHD in adults can be a challenging process as some of the existing measures assess current adult behaviors (Conners, Erhart, & Sparrow, 1999) while others assess the adult’s perceptions of their past childhood behaviors (Ward, Wender, & Reimherr, 1993). There are many variations of rating scales currently used in the field to assess ADHD in children and adults. More research is needed in the field to test the correlation between rating scales and their ability to identify symptoms of ADHD in adults.

Proposed Research
This research is a continuation of my involvement in the Child and Adult Behaviors study led by Dr. Dennis Rodriguez. I became involved in this study in January, 2006, as a member of the Cognitive Neuroscience Lab through course work in P495-Readings & Research in Psychology.

This study investigates the reliability, validity and correlation between five different measures currently used to identify symptoms of ADHD. Questions from five different rating scales will be used in this study. The five scales vary in their assessment approach in that some are composed of questions that address current adult behaviors while others address the adult’s perceptions of past childhood behaviors. The following paragraphs provide the name of each scale used in the study and a sample question from each to enhance the understanding of this research.


The Brown Attention-Deficit Disorder Scale for adults assesses the individual's behaviors over the past six months (Brown, 1996). “Remembers some of the details in required reading but has difficulty grasping the main idea,” is a sample question from the Brown Attention-Deficit Disorder Scale for adults (Brown).
Barkley & Murphy (1998) developed a self-report current symptoms scale that is being used in part in this study. It addresses current adult behaviors. “Blurt out answers before questions have been completed,” is a sample question from the scale (Barkley & Murphy).

The Conners’ Adult ADHD Rating Scales (CAARS) presents questions relating to recent adult behaviors (Conners et al., 1999). “I forget to remember things,” is a sample question from the CAARS (Conners et al.).

The Wender Utah Rating Scale (WURS) assesses symptoms in adults retroactively by extracting information concerning their perceptions of past childhood behaviors (Wender, 1998). “As a child, I was active, restless, always on the go,” is a sample question from the WURS (Wender).

All the questions from each of the above mentioned rating scales were compiled into the survey used for this research. By including questions concerning both current adult behaviors and perceived behaviors from childhood, researchers will be able to determine the correlation between these two types of questions in identifying symptoms of ADHD in adults.

Currently, participants are completing the survey. It is anticipated that researchers will continue to collect data by inviting participants to complete the survey through Summer 1 Session. A SMART fellowship would provide me with the opportunity to continue being involved in this research through the summer.

Collecting data using questions from these five scales will yield a variety of results. The data will be analyzed to determine how the scales correlate with each other in their ability to identify ADHD symptoms. From the data collected, researchers will be able to suggest which questions and scales had the greatest numerical significance in identifying ADHD symptoms in those participants that were self-identified as ADHD. Also, data collected will be analyzed to describe how the questions concerning the perceptions of childhood behavior correlate with those questions that assess current adult behaviors in their ability to identify ADHD symptoms.

Dr. Rodriguez anticipates that the findings from this study will be reported and published in a peer-reviewed journal. Results will assist clinicians in making an informed selection of a reliable rating scale to identify symptoms of ADHD in adults. Findings will also present researchers with empirical data that will advance the understanding of ADHD rating scales and impart an enlarged foundation of knowledge to further future research in the field.

A SMART fellowship would provide me with the opportunity to gain experience analyzing the data collected in the research. This would not only further the present research but would provide me with valuable skills and experience that will assist me in completing my senior study and enhance my ability to succeed in graduate school.

References


**Proposed Research Schedule**

The time I have spent working in the cognitive neuroscience lab under the supervision of Dr. Rodriguez has already had a significant impact on my education at IUSB. I have gained a practical understanding of research by being a lab assistant. It has provided me with a working understanding of what is involved in the process of conducting research. By continuing to work for Dr. Rodriguez this summer, I will be able to acquire a complete understanding of the entire process as this will allow me to remain a part of the research through the project’s completion. I am looking forward to continuing this research. The anticipated research schedule (40 hours/week, 400 hours total) is outlined below:

- **Weeks 1-3**
  Research data will be collected by inviting summer students to participate in the study. Data analysis methods will be learned from Dr. Rodriguez.

- **Weeks 4-6**
  Continue collection of research data by inviting summer students to participate in the study. Initiate data analysis. Write rough draft of Methods section of research.

- **Weeks 7-9**
  Determine the extent to which various items identified from five different scales relate to each other through data analysis.

- **Week 10**
  Summarize results and complete final draft of Methods section of the present study.