



Title	A Review and Critical Appraisal of Measures of Therapist-Patient Interactions in Mental Health Settings
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Aim

To assemble and appraise literature on tests and measures of therapist-patient interactions; make recommendations for practice, training, and research; and establish benchmarks for standardization, acceptability, and routine use of such measures.

Conclusions and results

The findings indicate that therapist-patient interaction can be measured using a wide range of instruments of varying value. However, care should be taken to ensure that the measure is suitable for the context in which it is to be used. This work suggests that specific research networks for developing therapist-patient measures should be established, that research activity should prioritize investment in increasing the evidence base of existing measures rather than attempting to develop new ones, and that research should focus on improving these existing measures in terms of acceptability and feasibility. The contextual map included the various concepts and domains that had been used in the context of the literature on therapist-patient interactions, and was used to guide the successive stages of the review. Three developmental processes were identified as necessary to provide an effective therapeutic relationship: establishing a relationship, developing a relationship, and maintaining a relationship. Eighty-three therapist-patient measures having basic information on reliability and validity were identified for critical appraisal. The areas of the conceptual map that received most coverage were framework, therapist and patient engagement, roles, therapeutic techniques, and threats to the relationship. These areas relate to the 3 key developmental processes outlined above. Of the 83 measures matching the content domain, 43 met the minimum standard. In total, 30 measures displayed adequate responsiveness or precision. None of the 43 measures that met the minimum standard was fully addressed in terms of acceptability and feasibility evidence. Most of these measures described 3 or fewer components. Of the 83 measures matching the content domain, none met an industry standard.

Recommendations

See Executive Summary link at www.hta.ac.uk/project/1556.asp.

Methods

See Executive Summary link at www.hta.ac.uk/project/1556.asp.

Further research/reviews required

1) Specific research networks for the development of therapist-patient measures should be established. 2) Research activity should prioritize investments to increase the evidence base of existing measures rather than attempting to develop new ones. Where research effort and time are invested in new measures this should be done strategically in a fashion that will serve national policy needs. See Executive Summary link at www.hta.ac.uk/project/1556.asp.