

Comparing parent and teacher assessments of mental health in elementary school children

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The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Age 4-16

Versions for parents, teachers and for self-reporting for age 11-16

25 questions

5 subscales

Emotional symptoms

Hyperactivity/Concentration

Conduct

Peer relations

Pro-Social behaviour



The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

The Total Difficulties Scale

Emotional symptoms

Hyperactivity/Concentration

Conduct

Peer relations

0-40 points

High risk ≥ 16 Parent SDQ

≥ 17 Teacher SDQ



Aims

Compare teacher and parental assessments of the SDQ.

Find out if parents country of birth or education level affect how children are rated by parents and teachers.



Population

792 children in first and second grade, 14 schools

606 accepted to participate (76.5%)

512 children with both parental and teacher SDQs were included in the study (64.6%)

40% had Swedish parents (both Swedish)

68% had mothers with high education (≥ 12 years)

59% had fathers with high education (≥ 12 years)



Method

Cross-sectional study

Cronbachs alpha

Logistic regression

Factor Analysis



Frequencies

Total Difficulties scale

	Parental SDQ			Teacher SDQ		
	Low risk	High risk	Mean score	Low risk	High risk	Mean score
All	89.1%	10.9%	8.8	91.2%	8.8%	5.9
Girls	94.1%	5.9%	8.1	97.0%	4.0%	4
Boys	83.8%	16.2%	9.5	86.0%	14.0%	7
Swedish born parents	94%	5.8%	7.5	91.8%	8.2%	6.3
Non-Swedish born parents	85.6%	14.4%	9.6	90.3%	9.7%	5.5
High educated mothers	91.1%	8.9%	7.9	90.8%	9.2%	5.8
Low educated mothers	82.8%	17.5%	11.1	94.2%	5.8%	5.8



Overlap in Teacher and Parental SDQ

		Teacher SDQ				Total	
		Low risk		High risk		N	%
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Parental SDQ	Low risk	429	83.8	27	5.3	456	89.1
	High risk	38	7.4	18	3.5	56	10.9
Total		467	91.2	45	8.8	512	100.0

$$27 / 45 = 60\%$$



Factor analysis

Teacher and Parental SDQ

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8	Factor 9	Factor 10
Emotional symptoms			P	T						
			P	T						
			P	T						
			P	T						
			(P)	T						
Hyperactivity		T			P					
Concentration		T								
		T						P		
		(T)			P					
		T						P		
Peer-relations										T
										T
										T
										(T)
										T
Conduct	T									
	T									
	(T)									
	T									
							P			
Pro-social						T			(P)	
						T			P	
						T			P	
						T			P	
						T			P	

Factor loading ≥ 0.4 (≥ 0.3)



Internal Consistency

Cronbachs alpha

	Parental SDQ	Teacher SDQ
All	0.73	0.71
Girls	0.69	0.66
Boys	0.77	0.75



Multiple Logistic regression

High risk of having mental health problems

	Parent SDQ ≥ 17		Teacher SDQ ≥ 16	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Being a boy	3.14	1.6-6.2	3.8	1.6-9.0
Non Swedish-born parents	3.05	1.5-6.4	0.94	0.5-2.0
Low educated mothers	2.08	1.1-4.1	0.51	0.2-1.4
Low educated fathers	0.98	0.5-2.0	1.77	0.9-3.9

Bold letters significant



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What does this tell us?

The teacher SDQ shows good validity regarding Chronbach's alpha and especially, the five factor solution.

The teacher SDQ was not affected by socioeconomic factors.



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The parental SDQ also shows good validity regarding Chronbach's alpha but the factor solution for the parental SDQ looks very different.

The parental SDQ was affected by socioeconomic factors.

We don't know what this means when it comes to identifying children with high risk of mental health problems since we didn't study this.



Thank you!

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