

DOCUMENT SUMMARY This 2008 conference presentation abstract provides a key admission from within the clinical research community: the "gold standard" assessment, the Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised (ADI-R), is impractical for most clinical settings and places a "significant amount of subject burden" on parents. The proposed solution—to replace the ADI-R with two other standardized tools (the PDDBI questionnaire and the ADOS)—perfectly illustrates the system's flawed attempt to fix a broken standardized methodology with more standardized tests, rather than questioning the paradigm itself.

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## Identifying Autism Spectrum Disorders: Use of Standardized Questionnaires and the ADOS in Clinical Settings

### Why This Matters to Enliteners

This document, while dated and preliminary, is a valuable historical snapshot that captures the system admitting to the failures of its own "gold standard." The explicit statement that the ADI-R is too long, impractical for clinical use, and overly burdensome for parents is a powerful piece of evidence we can use to validate our critique of the traditional assessment model.

Furthermore, the proposed solution—to simply swap the burdensome ADI-R for a combination of the ADOS and another lengthy questionnaire (PDDBI)—perfectly demonstrates the system's inability to think outside the standardized testing box. Their goal is to find a "less cumbersome" way to arrive at the same pathologizing conclusions, not to fundamentally change the approach. This paper helps us illustrate that the problem isn't just one specific test, but the entire paradigm of standardized, deficit-focused assessment.

### A System Admits Its "Gold Standard" is Flawed

The primary value of this paper is its frank admission of the practical failures of the Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised (ADI-R), which is often cited as a cornerstone of a "thorough" evaluation.

- The authors state that the "gold standard" ADI-R takes 2-3 hours to administer.
- Because of its length, it is **"not practical for use in most clinical assessment settings"**. This raises the

question of whether research results using the ADI-R can even be applied to clinical populations.

- The ADI-R presents a **"significant amount of subject burden when used with parents"** in both research and clinical contexts.

## The Flawed Solution: Replacing One Test with Two More

Instead of questioning the standardized testing model itself, the researchers sought to find a "less cumbersome combination of assessment tools" to serve as an alternative to the ADI-R.

- The proposed alternative combines the Pervasive Developmental Disorders Behavior Inventory (PDDBI) questionnaire with the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule- Generic (ADOS-G).
- The PDDBI is a 188-item parent questionnaire that takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.
- **Critique:** The PDDBI's scoring system is based on comparing a child to a "standardization sample of children with autism," where the average score (T-score of 50) represents the "typical score of a child with autism". This methodology reinforces a monolithic view of autism and fails to account for the vast neurodiversity within the autistic population.

## Critical Findings & Limitations

- **Preliminary Nature:** The abstract was written before data collection was complete, and the authors explicitly state, "these statistics may change slightly" and "Our final results are pending the close of our data base". This severely limits the weight of any conclusions.
- **Correlation is Not Validity:** The primary goal of the analysis was to see if the PDDBI and ADOS "correlated with each other diagnostically". From our perspective, showing that two standardized, deficit-based tools produce similar results does not prove validity; it merely proves internal consistency within a flawed system.
- **Sample:** The study used a chart review of consecutive referrals to a hospital clinic. The final diagnoses were provided by an "interdisciplinary evaluation team" using the DSM-IV-TR.

## Quotes We Might Use

- **On the impracticality of the "Gold Standard":** "Given the length of the ADI-R (typical assessment times range from 2-3 hours), it is not practical for use in most clinical assessment settings..."
- **On the burden placed on parents:** "For that matter, the ADI-R presents a significant amount of subject burden when used with parents as part of research studies as well".
- **On the questionable relevance of research:** "...making application of research results to clinical populations arguably questionable".