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BIS 11

Barratt Impulsiveness Scale

The Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-11; Patton et al., 1995) is a questionnaire designed to assess the personality/behavioral construct of impulsiveness. It is the most widely cited instrument for the assessment of impulsiveness and has been used to advance our understanding of this construct and its relationship to other clinical phenomena for 50 years (for review see Stanford et al., 2009).

The following sections outline the BIS-11 scoring and factor structure, support for instrument questions and variations of the scale.

Scoring and Factor Structure of the BIS-11

The current version of the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-11; Patton et al., 1995) is composed of 30 items describing common impulsive or non-impulsive (for reverse scored items) behaviors and preferences.

- [BIS-11 English version](#)

Items are scored on a 4-point scale:

Rarely/Never = 1

Occasionally = 2

Often = 3

Almost Always/Always = 4

The perspective of Dr. Barratt and *International Society for Research on Impulsivity* is that impulsivity is a multi-faceted construct and this multi-dimensionality is reflected in the BIS-11 factor structure. While many scholarly manuscripts report only the total score, it is recommended that at least the second order factors be reported to account for their individual contribution to the relationship being tested.

The Patton et al. (1995) manuscript defining the current version of the instrument performed a principal components analysis on BIS-11 scores gathered from a sample of 248 psychiatric inpatients and 412 university students. Factor analyses of from these cases revealed three second order and 6 oblique first order factors and three second order factors were identified. The following demonstrates the relationship of the first and second order factor structure as well as item scoring of the BIS-11 factors.

Barratt Impulsiveness Scale 11 – Factor Structure and Scoring			
2nd Order Factors	1st Order Factors	# of items	Items contributing to each subscale
Attentional	Attention	5	5, 9*, 11, 20*, 28
	Cognitive Instability	3	6, 24, 26
Motor	Motor	7	2, 3, 4, 17, 19, 22, 25
	Perseverance	4	16, 21, 23, 30*
Nonplanning	Self-Control	6	1*, 7*, 8*, 12*, 13*, 14
	Cognitive Complexity	5	10*, 15*, 18, 27, 29*
			*reverse scored items

References

BIS-11 instrument reference

Factor structure of the Barratt impulsiveness scale.
Patton JH, Stanford MS, and Barratt ES (1995)

Journal of Clinical Psychology, 51, 768-774. PubMed ID [8778124](#)

Recent review of the BIS-11

Fifty years of the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale: An update and review.

Stanford MS, Mathias CW, Dougherty DM, Lake SL, Anderson NE, and Patton JH (2009)

Personality and Individual Differences, 47, 385-395.

Support for BIS-11 Clinical and Research Applications

For questions and guidance for clinical and research use of this instrument and it's interpretation contact Dr. Stanford at:

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BIS-11a Issue

During the development of the BIS-11 an intermediate version of the scale designated in the literature as the BIS-11A (Barratt, 1994) was distributed to several labs for review. The BIS-11A resulted from an analysis of BIS-10 data during the early development phase of version 11. Unfortunately, this “working” version of the scale has been more widely disseminated than was ever intended or anticipated.

The BIS-11 (Patton et al., 1995) is the most up to date and psychometrically sound version of the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale. Earlier versions should not be used unless they are part of a longitudinal study that began prior to the publication of the BIS-11.

Dr. Marijn Lijffijt has developed a procedure by which BIS-11A scores can be prorated to BIS-11 scores. The reliability of this procedure is questionable but it is a reasonable way to deal with BIS-11A data. Six items originally present on the BIS-11A are no longer present on the BIS-11 (and vice versa), so the number of items on the BIS-11A is actually 24 instead of 30. The consequence is that the scores have to be divided by the number of items and multiplied depending on the scale that you are interested in to be consistent with the BIS-11. If you are interested in trying this procedure please download the attached material. Please contact Marijn Lijffijt, Ph.D. (Marijn.Lijffijt@uth.tmc.edu) if you have questions related to the prorating procedure.

- [BIS-11a to BIS-11 proration](#)

Barratt, E.S. (1994). Impulsiveness and Aggression. In Monahan, J. and H. J. Steadman (Eds.), Violence and Mental Disorder: Developments in Risk Assessment (pp. 61-79). University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

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