Assessing Risk for Social Victimization: Validation of the Social Vulnerability Questionnaire

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Introduction

Social Vulnerability
- Risk of being victimized
- Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are more socially vulnerable
- Unable to avoid adverse events that affect emotional, physical, or financial wellbeing
  - physical and sexual abuse, personal or property crimes, bullying, persuasion, discrimination, neglect, financial abuse

Social Vulnerability in Adulthood
- Risk factors are not well-known
- Few good measurements to assess risk

Purpose
- Define psychometric properties of the Social Vulnerability Questionnaire (SVQ)
- Determine group differences in social vulnerability, as indicated by the SVQ

Method

Full Sample

Participants
- N = 428 caregivers of individuals with IDD
- Mean age of individuals with IDD = 21.38 (8.03)
- 60% male; 85% Caucasian
- 85% lived with parents or guardian
- Received average of 1.54 allied health services

Restricted Sample
- Williams syndrome = 134
- Autism Spectrum Disorder = 101
- Down syndrome = 34

	WS	ASD	DS	F/χ^2
Gender (% male)	50.7%	82.2%	52.9%	29.66**
Age	26.90 (8.19)	17.73 (5.11)	19.97 (6.61)	56.71**
ADL total	45.94 (7.62)	43.80 (8.68)	46.84 (7.25)	2.59
Allied services	1.63 (1.79)	1.65 (1.45)	1.76 (1.39)	0.08

Method

Measures

Social Vulnerability Questionnaire
- Developed to measure the social vulnerability of individuals with IDD
- 30-item parent/caregiver-report measure
- Rate statements about the individual with IDD on a four-point Likert scale
- Original exploratory factor analysis
  - yielded 30 items
  - loaded into six factors
  - accounted for 49.1% of the variance
  - Yielded 6 factors
    - Risk Awareness
    - Parental Independence
    - Social Protection
    - Credulous
    - Vulnerable Appearance
    - Emotional Abuse

Procedure
- Majority of respondents (404) recruited through nationwide e-mail listservs
  - email inviting participation in study on sociability and victimization of individuals with IDD
  - link to survey was embedded in e-mail
- The remaining respondents recruited from ongoing research projects and from local summer programs

Data Analysis
Exploratory Factor Analysis
- Principal axis factoring with a promax rotation
- Item classification based on individual factor loadings >.4, and all other factor loadings <.3
- Only one item was retained with a second factor loading >.3 (.31) due to the strong face validity of the item to the given factor.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis
- Using the identified six-factor structure

Discriminant Function Analysis
- To determine whether subscales of the SVQ could be used to identify differing patterns of social vulnerability among individuals with WS, ASD, and DS

Results

Item	Risk Awareness	Parental Independence	Social Protection	Credulous	Vulnerable Appearance	Emotional Abuse
Item 5	.60					
Item 17	.64					
Item 20	.76					
Item 22	.48			.31		
Item 26	.50					
Item 29	.67					
Item 30	.69					
Item 2		.70				
Item 23		.59				
Item 24		.89				
Item 1			.70			
Item 4			.61			
Item 14			.88			
Item 16			.54			
Item 8				.70		
Item 11			.24	.43	.24	
Item 12				.65		
Item 13				.61		
Item 19				.76		
Item 28				.73		
Item 9					.61	
Item 10					1.01	
Item 18					.38	
Item 6						.85
Item 7						.89
Item 15						.78
Item 21						.73
Item 27						.86
Eigenvalue	3.97	1.72	2.04	2.47	1.47	5.42
% of variance	14.16	6.13	7.30	8.83	19.37	5.24
Cronbach's α	.81**	.76**	.75**	.82**	.66**	.91**

Exploratory Factor Analysis
- 28 of 30 items analyzed for factor analysis
  - 2 items (item 3: "My child is able to read social cues, such as facial expressions" and item 25: "My child knows not to talk to strangers and follows that rule") did not have clear factor loadings and were removed
- Six-factor structure accounted for 61.04% of the measure variance.
- All items loaded onto the originally-conceived factors, with the exception of Item 11 ("Others perceive him/her as immature/naïve").
  - Initially conceptualized as part of Vulnerable Appearance subscale, but factor loadings revealed a stronger fit with the Credulous subscale
  - Future use of SVQ should classify item as part of the Credulous subscale.

Confirmatory factor analysis
- Acceptable fit indices
  - RMSEA = .05, TLI = .91, CFI = .92
  - suggesting the six-factor structure represents a reasonably good fit of the data

Conclusion

Discriminant Function Analysis
- 2 significant functions
- Group membership correctly predicted =69.1%
- **Function 1**
  - Wilks' Λ= .56, X^2= 151.82, df = 12, p < .001, canonical correlation = .62
  - Distinguished between individuals with ASD and individuals with WS or DS
  - *Vulnerable Appearance* was strongest predictor of group membership
    - WS or DS scored significantly than ASD (coefficient = .91)
  - *Social Protection* was next strongest
    - ASD had higher scores

Function 2
- Wilks' Λ= .92, χ2= 23.34, df = 5, p < .001, canonical correlation = .29
- Distinguished individuals with WS from individuals with DS
- DS scored higher than WS on *Emotional Abuse* (coefficient = -.64)
- DS scored lower than WS lower on *Credulousness* (coefficient = .79)

Factor	ASD	DS	WS
Social Protection	12.10 (2.74)	9.15 (2.68)	10.30 (2.75)
Parental Independence	5.44 (2.46)	5.77 (2.31)	6.22 (2.30)
Risk Awareness	19.17 (4.64)	19.44 (5.08)	20.90 (4.39)
Emotional Abuse	10.51 (3.91)	8.97 (2.97)	8.53 (3.00)
Credulous	12.68 (3.89)	12.62 (3.06)	13.63 (3.18)
Vulnerable Appearance	19.17 (4.64)	19.44 (5.08)	20.90 (4.39)

Conclusion

- Results show strong and clear support for a six-factor structure, mostly aligning with the original conceptualization; CFA demonstrates reasonable fit
- More research is needed to understand how patterns of social vulnerability may impact individuals with IDD across the lifespan
- Subscales of the SVQ can be used to identify systems of vulnerability to be addressed for individuals with IDD