

Outline project CATja

Background & Aim

Following the governmental agreement *The future of mental health services 2013-2014*, health care services in the Netherlands will be rearranged: The generalistic mental health care will be expanded, and much more patients are supposed to be treated within general practices. Furthermore, general practitioners (GPs), supported by their mental health assistants (MHAs), are expected to fulfil the role of gatekeepers, as they have to decide which patients will be treated within general practices for their psychological complaints, and which patients will be referred to either generalistic or specialistic mental health care.

In order to facilitate this new responsibility, the Mental Health Services Friesland (GGZ Friesland) and The Friesland Insurance Company have decided to finance the development of an online test battery for mental complaints. In collaboration with the department of psychometrics & statistics of the University of Groningen, the department of psychometrics & statistics of Twente University, the University Center for Psychopathology and the Rob Giel Research Center (UMCG) have developed a test battery, referred to as ***CATja***.

Procedure & content CATja

With ***CATja***, clients can be screened in a smart way for various domains of psychopathology and for factors that may increase clients' resilience. Smart, because items to be utilized are tailored to responses given to previous items, and also because items that have little added value for certain respondents are omitted. In fact, this process is comparable to what an experienced interviewer does. The algorithm is based on the principle of computerized adaptive testing (CAT), and by utilization of this principle, much less items are required to reach measurements that are as precise as those that are based on traditional questionnaires. By using ***CATja***, care givers can faster reach decisions about what level of care suits their clients best.

The first version of the screener comprises the following five domains of psychopathology: anxiety, depression, positive and negative symptoms of psychosis, and general symptoms of stress. Furthermore, two constructs of positive psychology are also available: friendship and emotional support.

An innovative screener to support primary care in triage regarding mental health

Pilot & plans for the future

At the moment, the first version of **CATja** is tested by a small group MHAs in daily practice. The first feedback is positive in general, and this is why we are very busy with further improving the application. We are going to enlarge and enhance the report that is sent to the MHA, we are planning to connect treatment advices with specific profiles of strengths and weaknesses, and we are going to add modules for Healthy lifestyle and traumatic experiences.

The Prodromal Questionnaire: a case for IRT-based adaptive testing of psychotic experiences?

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/mpr.1518/full>