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Kelsey Johnson
Western Michigan University

Shannon Funk
Western Michigan University, shannon.e.funk@wmich.edu

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Comparison of Psychometric Properties of Balance Assessment Tools for Older Adults

Kelsey Johnson and Shannon Funk

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

This CAT examines the reliability and validity of popular age-normed balance assessment tools (Berg Balance Screen, Tinetti Balance Assessment, and Mini-BESTest) with older adults.

1Ask: Research Question
What is the most valid and reliable age-normed assessment tool for measuring balance among older adults?

2Acquire: Search Terms
Databases: ClinicalKey, ProQuest, PubMed

Search Terms: Berg Balance Scale, Tinetti Balance Scale, Balance Assessment Sub-Acute, Age Normed Balance Assessments, Reliability Validity Balance Assessment, Balance and Psychomotor

2bAcquire: Selected Articles
Park (2018): A meta-analysis examining fall risk assessment tools for the elderly across settings in regards to predictive validity.

Telenius, Engedal, & Bergland (2015): A cross-sectional study that examines the inter-rater reliability of the Berg Balance Scale (BBS), 30 s chair stand test (CST), and 6 m walking test, as well as construct validity of BBS in nursing home residents with mild-to-moderate dementia.

Godí Franchignoni, Caligari, Giordano, Turcato, & Nardone (2013): Prospective single-group study that compares reliability, validity, and responsiveness of the Mini-BESTest and BBS in individuals with balance disorders.

3Appraise: Study Quality
Park (2018): Level 1. 33 articles selected for review. Analyzed fall risk assessment tools across settings. Exclusion of studies with patients < 60 years old. Includes studies from community-dwelling and inpatient settings.

Telenius, Engedal, & Bergland (2015): Focused on nursing home patients and assesses reliability and validity of commonly used balance assessments. Small sample size (N=33) and inclusion of only nursing home residents. International study; unclear if it can generalize to United States populations.

Godí Franchignoni, Caligari, Giordano, Turcato, & Nardone (2013): Examined a variety of balance disorders and commonly used balance assessments. 99 participants with one of 10 diagnoses were included. Limitation of convenience sample from a single rehabilitation facility.

3bAppraise: Study Results
Park (2018): BBS is most useful tool for identifying older adults with low fall risk (AUC=97, ICC=.995). Tinetti was found to have insignificant evidence of predictive validity (p=.57)

Telenius, Engedal, & Bergland (2015): All 3 assessment tools have high inter-rater reliability. BBS had weighted k scores from .83-1, indicating excellent inter-rater reliability. Cronbach’s alpha of BBS= .949.

Godí Franchignoni, Caligari, Giordano, Turcato, & Nardone (2013): Test-retest reliability and inter-rater reliability of Mini-BESTest had a mean score of 11.1(7.6), while BBS had a mean score of 38.4(14.2). Cronbach’s alpha at baseline/follow-up for Mini-BESTest was .90/.91, and for BBS was .93/.93. Test retest reliability was significant at p<.001. Of the two, the Mini-BESTest has better test-retest reliability while BBS has higher internal consistency, though they are both significant.

4Apply: Conclusions for Practice
Both the Mini-BESTest and Berg Balance Scales were found to be reliable and valid at measuring change in functional balance. The Tinetti was found to be the least valid and reliable assessment for measuring balance in older adults. The Mini-BESTest appears to have a lower ceiling effect and slightly higher reliability compared to the BBS. This could increase accuracy when demonstrating improvement in balance function for reimbursement. These two assessments have high inter-rater reliability suggesting that they can be used by different therapists with similar results. The Mini-BESTest examines dynamic balance such as reactive postural control and gait, which is unexplored by the BBS.

References

Clinical Bottom Line: The Mini-BESTest is the most valid and reliable assessment for measuring balance in older adults.