

Why Some PANSS Interviews are Longer than Others? Factors Associated with PANSS Interview Length

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What is the Methodological Question Being Addressed? The study explored the relationship between PANSS interview length and PANSS subscale scores as well as between PANSS interview length and PANSS score fluctuations.

Introduction The Positive and Negative Symptom Scale (PANSS) is one of most widely used scales in clinical trials as a tool to evaluate symptom severity associated with schizophrenia. Whereas it usually takes approximately 45 to 50 minutes to conduct a clinical interview using the PANSS, there seems to be great variability in interview length (Kott & Daniel, 2018). This study aims to understand factors that are associated with interview length of the PANSS including PANSS subscale scores and total score fluctuations between consecutive visits.

Methods This study examined PANSS data from global double-blind, placebo controlled clinical trials in schizophrenia. The analyses included a total of 6,318 PANSS interviews conducted by 265 qualified site raters. In order to understand the relationship between PANSS interview length and total and subscale scores as well as between PANSS interview length and score fluctuations between two consecutive visits, Pearson's correlation tests were conducted.

Results The mean PANSS interview length was 47.71 minutes with a relatively large standard error (SE = 19.04 mins). A correlation test found the relationship between the PANSS total score and interview length to be significant ($p < 0.0001$) and positive ($r = 0.15$).

There was also a significant and positive relationship between duration and the three PANSS subscale scores ($p < 0.05$). However, the correlation between the interview length and Negative scores was much weaker ($r = 0.034$) in comparison to that between interview length and Positive and General Psychopathology scores ($r = 0.18$ and 0.18 , respectively).

A correlation test found the relationship between the PANSS total score change and interview duration to be significant ($p < 0.05$) and positive but very weak ($r = 0.047$). Interestingly, there does seem to be greater variability in duration with higher absolute score change from previous visit. The standard errors remain small when there is a minimal score change but when the score change increases to 34, the standard error approximately doubles to 18 minutes. With a score change greater than 34, there is even higher variability and more fluctuations in the mean duration.

Conclusion This study found there is great variance in PANSS interview length even when raters received standardized training. In addition, it suggests that when subjects present severe positive symptoms and/or general psychopathology symptoms it takes longer to conduct PANSS interviews but severity of negative symptoms may have only minimum impact on interview length. This study also found that greater PANSS score change between consecutive visits is associated with greater

variability in PANSS interview duration. Potential reasons for these findings and future implications will be discussed in the poster.

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Keywords

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