Abstract

Background: Facial scales are used in the assessment of emotional states. The scales present different numbers of faces to measure the varying levels of intensity of children’s emotional responses. This paper seeks to analyze whether the subjects are able to match the appropriate descriptors of a degree of anxiety with the corresponding facial image. Method: A sample of 463 children aged 6 to 12 years was taken from the Autonomous Communities of Murcia and the Balearics. Results: Significant differences were obtained among the six-year-olds, $M = 2.58$ (SD = 0.85), in the three-face scale and $M = 2.98$ (SD = 1.52) in the five-face scale. From 7 years on, there were no significant differences in the number of correct responses between the two scales. In general, girls scored higher than boys on both the three-face scale ($M = 2.89$, SD = 0.50 vs. $M = 2.75$, SD = 0.70) and the five-face scale ($M = 4.08$, SD = 1.41 vs. $M = 3.76$, SD = 1.56). Conclusion: The three-face scale is more appropriate for the correct matching of descriptors to different degrees of anxiety for children aged 6 to 12 years, whereas the five-face scale is more suited to children over 6 years.

Keywords

Age, anxiety, assessment, children, faces, facial affective scale (FAS), hospital.