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Stimulus Preference Assessment with Immediate versus Delayed Item Access

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INTRODUCTION

- Stimulus Preference Assessments can foster the independence of individuals by allowing them to choose the types of activities, food, or items they prefer.
- Access to chosen items may be given during the assessment (immediate access) or some time after the assessment (delayed access).
- The purpose of this study was to compare whether immediate and delayed access would yield similar preference hierarchies.

METHOD

- Participants* were 2 males and 1 female with developmental disabilities
- Each participant was assessed on five items using a paired-stimulus preference assessment procedure.
- In the *Immediate Access* condition, participants were given 30s of access to selected stimulus immediately after each trial.
- In the *Delayed Access* condition, participants were given access to their most preferred item at the end of the assessment for an amount of time equal to the number of times the item was selected multiplied by 30s.

RESULTS

- Preference hierarchies for the two conditions are shown in the figure.
- P1 shows high concordance between preference hierarchies with a *Tau* (τ) correlation of .91.
- P2's relative preference among the items was similar in both conditions, except that one of the most preferred items in the immediate access condition became one of the least preferred items in the delayed condition ($\tau = 35$).
- P3's concordance in relative preference for the two most preferred items in the immediate condition was low ($\tau = .44$)

DISCUSSION

- The most preferred item identified in the delayed condition was also a most preferred item in the immediate condition for two participants. If concordance increases in future replications, clinicians may choose to conduct a delayed access stimulus preference assessment in order to increase the efficiency of their assessment.
- Future research should seek to systematically replicate these findings by investigating the impact of varied stimuli and assessment methods, increasing the number of items assessed and investigating the impact of pre-requisite skills such as discrimination skills.

