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Alcie Anne Griffith
Portland State University

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THE CHILDREN'S SCHEDULE OF RECENT EXPERIENCES
AS A PREDICTIVE TEST OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS
OF CHILDREN ENTERING FIRST GRADE

by

ALCIE ANNE GRIFFITH

A report submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF
SOCIAL WORK

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1974

APPROVED
Faculty Research Advisor

There has been an increasing effort in recent years to find non-biological etiologic factors which contribute to disease and illness. Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe (1967) developed the Social Readjustment Rating Scale, SRRS, towards this end. Using the SRRS model several other studies have been conducted concerning specific groups of people and/or diseases. Adaptations of the SRRS have been made for specific groups including football players and their injuries (Bramwell), Malaysians as compared to Americans (Tai-Hwang Woon) and psychiatric patients (Coddington).

The SRRS delineates life events which have occurred within the past year through the administration of a questionnaire named the Schedule of Recent Experiences, SRE. Each experience is assigned a score according to the amount of relative social adjustment required by the event. This score is known as a Life Change Unit, LCU (Holmes 1972). For a more detailed and recent review of the literature see J. Holmes and J. Bartlett, Portland State University Library, 1973.

John Gilberts, M.D., of the University of Oregon Medical School, has developed a school entrance health exam which includes five health "modules". These modules are Socio-economic/Health Care, Nutrition/Dental Health, Behavior/Communication, Physical Health, and Immunization. Health examinations are frequently administered to children entering school. However, Gilberts' exam known as the Multi-Modular Health Examination also includes an SRE questionnaire and a Children's Behavior Rating Scale, CBRS. The CBRS is an adaptation of the well known AML test designed by Brownbridge (1969) and statistically validated by Cowen (1973). In the 1973 study by Holmes and Bartlett

the validity of the AML was again examined and there was a high correlation between children needing referrals and high AML scores.

During 1973 a replica of Holmes' SRE with minor adaptations in certain questions was administered to all entering first grade children in two rural, coastal Oregon counties. (see Appendix I) J. Holmes and J. Bartlett (unpublished 1973) reported "the SRE as used in this study will not be of any use in predicting maladjustment." They recommended "...a further modification of the SRE, SRRS or both might prove more useful."

If revised, could the above mentioned SRE delineate children with behavior problems? If indeed the SRE suggests behavioral problems then this test could assist in identifying children who need help before they develop serious difficulties in school. Using the combined CBRS and SRE scores it was hoped that a definitive and predictive profile of behavior would result.

Holmes' original adult population scores had been used to evaluate the 1973 study. With the above recommendations in mind a modification of the SRRS and SRE was undertaken in 1974 to make it pertinent to a child population.

METHOD

STAGE I - A small pilot study was needed to determine if in fact different values should be assigned to the SRE events. The instructions for the SRRS were rephrased so as to remind the respondents to make their responses relevant to "the necessary degree of readjustment as they would influence a child of five years of age." (see Appendix II) The second problem was to change the wording of each event so it

would relate to the child's experience. (see Appendix III)

A SRRQ (Social Readjustment Rating Questionnaire) was administered to a sample of convenience, N=22. The SRRQ was modeled after a questionnaire of the same name designed by Holmes and Rahe (1967). A coefficient of variation was calculated to aid in determining which questions were responded to with a high degree of agreement. Those questions in which the CV was above .5 were eliminated except in two instances in which it was felt the questions should be retained because on glance and without analysis they appeared to be influential to children. The coefficient of variation on the additional two retained questions was .548 and .541.

The pilot study pointed out which questions were inappropriate to a child population. Twenty questions received widely divergent values, i.e. "foreclosure of mortgage" received values ranging from a minimum of 1 (one) point up to a maximum of 70 points. The responses to the twenty eliminated questions were so inconsistent that no accurate measure of the impact of these events upon the children could be made. This left twenty-four events to include in Stage II of the study.

STAGE II - Stage II activities were designed to collect a larger sample of respondents to assign new values to the SRRS. Because the SRRQ is administered in very sparsely populated areas as well as larger population centers, a comparison of rural, suburban and urban responses was made using county population of residence as our determinant.

Table I below indicates the demographic characteristics of the sample. The total Oregon population for the 1970 census was 2,910,385 with 56,226 being other than white. All respondents listed their race.

as white except one who checked the category of other. This appears to be in line with the population distribution in the state as there is only one non-white person per each 52 white people residing in Oregon.

Table I: Distribution of Sample by Age, Education, Ethnic Affiliation, Residence, & Sex
N=98

Age	40 and under	55
	over 40	42
	no response	1
Education	high school or less	26
	post high school	70
	no response	2
Ethnic Affiliation	white	95
	other	1
	no response	2
Residence by County Population	rural (50,000)	39
	suburban (50,000-100,000)	12
	urban (100,000)	42
	no response	5
Sex	female	68
	male	29
	no response	1

Although it was speculated that there would be some differences in the value and impact of certain events due to the urban versus rural setting this did not appear to be as influential a characteristic as the level of education. The value of these events are equally applicable to any geographic population of five year olds. Educational level of respondents resulted in some value differences. However, unless the child population had all parents with great or

sparse educations the differences would be nominal since only five of the twenty-four events were significant at .05 level. (see Table II)

Table II: T-Test of Responses of Sub-Groups
Events Significant Beyond ± 1.96

<u>Sub-group</u>	<u>Event</u>
male-female	-2.06 parent death
	-2.13 remarriage of parent
rural-urban	-2.80 family member death
	-2.26 friends death
high school- post high school	+2.60 remarriage of parent
	+2.09 separation of parents
	+3.10 parents reconcile
	+2.08 mother begins work
	+2.46 child begins school
40 years and under- over 40 years	none beyond ± 1.96

Female respondents gave greater readjustment values to the events of parent death and remmarriage. This might be associated with the dependent role assignment of females in this society and a subsequent increase in the degree of change a female perceives to be necessary for herself and her children if she loses or gains a mate.

The urban population assigned higher values to death of family and friends (not including the childs' parents), than did the rural respondents. This may be attributable to the higher visibility and contact rate of an urban population.

There were no discernable differences due to the age of the respondents. Educational level has been discussed above.

Out of 100 completed questionnaires the highest and lowest scoring respondents were eliminated. The SRRS was revalued according to this data. In all events except nine the values obtained from this study were higher than Holmes'. Of those nine, two values were the same, while the other seven events were valued lower. These latter events appear to be more significant to an adult population than to the amount of adjustment required of a child. (see Table III below)

A factor analysis of the twenty-four items on the new SRE scores showed no factors with eigenvalues greater than one (1) indicating that these factors are not well defined. The events themselves appear to be highly discriminating, separate categories.

A factor analysis of the CBRS with the new SRE scores as an additional variable yielded three well defined clusters of events comparable to the original AML model: 1) moodiness 2) acting-out 3) learning and withdrawal. The SRE proved to be a significant variable (loading = 0.58) in the acting-out cluster only. It does not appear to be associated with the moodiness cluster or learning difficulties cluster. A multiple regression analysis of the CBRS and new SRE scores proved fruitless with a weak relationship. (see Table IV)

Table III: Comparison of Childrens' SRE and
Holmes' Adult SRE Values

EVENT	Childrens' SRE mean value	Holmes' SRE mean value	Difference mean value
1. gain family member	44	39	+5
2. breadwinner in jail	45	63	-18
3. death of parent(s)	100	100	0
4. death of family member	57	63	-6
5. death of friend	48	37	+11
6. pregnancy	28	40	-12
7. health change family member	42	44	-2
8. finances change	31	38	-7
9. remarriage	72	50	+22
10. residence change	40	20	+20
11. child leaving home	29	29	0
12. separation of parents	75	65	+10
13. reconciliation	58	45	+13
14. fired from job	31	47	-16
15. divorce	83	73	+10
16. argument	62	35	+27
17. mother begins work	44	26	+18
18. breadwinner changes work	33	20	+13
19. recreation change	57	19	+38
20. major illness	59	53	+6
21. living conditions change	33	25	+8
22. retirement	28	45	-17
23. change of school	46	20	+26
24. begin schooling	49	26	+23

Table IV: Analysis of Variance for the Regression

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Values
Attributable to regression	11	418941.31250	38085.57031	
Deviation from regression	181	4595558.00000	25389.82031	1.50003
Total	192	5014499.00000		

$$R^2 = .08$$

IMPLICATIONS

Rescoring the values of the individual life experiences to a specific population of five year olds changed the total possible score of life change units to a possible 1,194 LCU rather than the 1,022 LCU's of Holmes' SRRS; an increase of 172 LUC's. However, after rescoring, the question of what a high or low SRE score tells about a child still remained. In examining the factor analysis of the SRE no clear picture of events or combinations of events could be found. Thus it appears that the SRE is a highly independent measure of distinct experiences but appears to be a poor measure of an overall combination of events. No conclusive evidence of the impact certain events had upon the child's adjustment could be discovered.

Initially the SRE in combination with the CBRS was a significant variable in the acting-out cluster. However, further analysis could not substantiate a strong correlation between a high CBRS score in the acting-out category and a high SRE score. This indicates that both tests pointed to acting out characteristics but for widely different reasons.

CONCLUSIONS

The SRE's greatest value to the Multi-Modular Health Examination appears at this time to be as a substantiative test to support the CBRS. Some merit could be given for the convenience of having the historical, social data derived from the SRE on hand for school personnel to refer to as necessary. However, the SRE questionnaire does not appear to be a strong and independent measure of behavior. Consequently it appears inadvisable to collect, analyze and store this data which is not of immediate, demonstrable value and which becomes obsolete, by the very nature of the questionnaire in a matter of one or two years.

The SRE is not able in its' present form to predict behavior problems. As a retrospective test it may prove valuable to collect this data when a child comes to the attention of the school or community. However, the SRE does not provide conclusive evidence of its predictive capacities and should not be retained as a portion of the Multi-Modular Health Examination. It has been modified to a child population with no increase of its functional application. No further recommendations for change and modification will be made regarding its efficacy as a behavioral predictor.

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APPENDICES

- I. Schedule of Recent Experiences, 1973
- II. Directions for Social Readjustment Rating Scale, 1974
- III. Social Readjustment Rating Questionnaire, 1974
- IV. Revised Schedule of Recent Experiences, 1974

SCHEDULE OF RECENT EXPERIENCES

APPENDIX I

DIRECTIONS:

1. MARK CORRECT ANSWER WITH A NO. 2 PENCIL.
2. DO NOT FOLD OR BEND THIS SHEET.

3

OF CHILD

CHART NO.

DO NOT MARK IN THESE SPACES

Relationship of person completing this questionnaire to child: _____ NR

Grandmother _____ Grandfather _____

GUARDIAN Mother _____ GUARDIAN Father _____ Other _____

How long has _____ been parent or guardian of this child? _____

1 2 3 4 YEARS 5 6 7 8 9+ _____ NR

Has the provider(s) (breadwinners) of your family had either a lot more or a lot less trouble with the boss this last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Has this child had a major change in sleeping habits (sleeping a lot more or a lot less, or sleeping during different times of the day) last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Has this child had a major change in eating habits (a lot more or a lot less, or very different meal habits) last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Has this child had a change of personal habits (dress, manner, friends) last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Has this child had a major change in the usual type and/or amount of recreation last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Has your family had a major change in social activities (clubs, movies, visiting, etc.) this last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Has your family had a major change in church activities (a lot more or a lot less than usual) in this last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Was there a major change in number of family get-togethers (a lot more or a lot less than usual) this last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Was there a major change in your family's financial state (a lot worse off or a lot better off than usual) this last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Has your family had major troubles with in-laws last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Have the parents of this child's family had a major change in the number of arguments (either a lot more or a lot less than usual regarding child rearing, personal habits, etc.) this last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

Has anyone in the family had sexual difficulties this last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

How many times has this child experienced major personal injury or illness last year? _____ NR

None 1 2 3 4 5+ _____ NR

CARD NO. _____

00,000 10,000 20,000 30,000 40,000 50,000 60,000 70,000 80,000 90,000

0,000 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 5,000 6,000 7,000 8,000 9,000

000 100 200 300 400 CHART NO. 500 600 700 800 900

00 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4

14. How many members of your family (other than either parent) have been lost by death during the last year? _____ NR

None 1 2 3 4 5+ _____ NR

15. Did either or both parents of this child die last year? _____ NR

YES NO _____ NR

16. How many close friends of this child died last year? _____ NR

None 1 2 3 4 5+ _____ NR

17. How many new members were added to your family (through birth, adoption, older moving in, etc.) this last year? _____ NR

None 1 2 3 4 5+ _____ NR

18. How many times last year has there been a major change in the health or behavior of a family member other than this child? _____ NR

None 1 2 3 4 5+ _____ NR

19. How many times has your family moved (changed residence) this last year? _____ NR

None 1 2 3 4 5+ _____ NR

20. How many times has anyone in your family experienced detention in jail or another institution this last year? _____ NR

None 1 2 3 4 5+ _____ NR

21. How many times this past year has someone in the family been found guilty of minor violations of the law (traffic tickets, jaywalking, disturbing the peace, etc.)? _____ NR

None 1 2 3 4 5+ _____ NR

22. How many times has the provider(s) of your family undergone a major business readjustment (merger, reorganization, bankruptcy etc.) this last year? _____ NR

None 1 2+ _____ NR

23. How many members of this child's immediate family married last year (remarriage of parent, older child)? _____ NR

None 1 2 3 4 5+ _____ NR

24. How many members of this child's immediate family got a divorce last year? _____ NR

None 1 2 3+ _____ NR

SCHEDULE OF RECENT EXPERIENCES APPENDIX I
CONTINUED

DIRECTIONS
1. MARK CORRECT ANSWER WITH NO. 2 PENCIL.
2. DO NOT FOLD OR BEND THIS PAGE.

NAME OF CHILD _____

CHART NO. _____

DO NOT MARK IN THESE SPACES

How many times was there a marital separation of the parents of this child last year?

None 1 2 3+ NR

How many times last year has a member of the family had an outstanding personal achievement?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

How many brothers or sisters of this child left home (through marriage, attending college, etc.) last year?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

Did either or both of the parents of this child experience retirement from work last year?

NO Father only Mother only Both Father and Mother NR

How many times last year was there a major change in working hours or conditions on the part of the breadwinner(s) of your family?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

How many times did the breadwinner(s) of your family have a major change in responsibility at work (promotion, demotion, lateral transfer)?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

How many times was the breadwinner(s) of your family fired (or terminated) from work last year?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

How many times was there a major change in living conditions for the family (building a new home, remodeling, deterioration of home or neighborhood last year)?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

How many times last year did the mother or guardian mother begin or cease working outside the home?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

How many times last year did the family take on a mortgage greater than \$10,000 (purchasing a home, business, etc.)?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

How many times last year did the family take on a mortgage or a loan less than \$10,000 (e.g., purchasing a car, T.V., freezer, etc.)?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

How many times last year did your family experience a foreclosure on a mortgage or a loan?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

How many times last year did your family take a vacation?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

CARD NO. _____

00,000 10,000 20,000 30,000 40,000 50,000 60,000 70,000 80,000 90,000

0,000 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 5,000 6,000 7,000 8,000 9,000

000 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900

00 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4

38. How many times last year did this child change to a new school (including kindergarten)?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

39. How many times last year did either parent of this child change to a different line of work?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

40. How many members of your family began (enter kindergarten or first grade) or ceased (graduate, dropout, etc.) formal schooling this last year?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

41. How many times was there a marital reconciliation between the parents of this child last year?

None 1 2 3 4 5+ NR

42. Was there a pregnancy within the family this last year?

YES NO NR

APPENDIX II

DIRECTIONS

- (A) Social readjustment includes the amount and duration of change in one's accustomed pattern of life resulting from various life events. As defined, social readjustment measures the intensity and length of time necessary to accomodate to a life event, regardless of the desirability of this event.
- (B) You are asked to rate a series of life events as to their relative degree of necessary readjustment as they would influence a child of five years of age. In scoring use all of your experience and personal observations in arriving at your answers. Some children accomodate to change more readily than others; some children adjust with particular ease or difficulty to only certain events. Therefore, strive to give your opinion of the average degree of readjustment necessary for each event rather than the extreme.
- (C) The mechanics of rating are these: Event 1, Gain of new family member, has been given an arbitrary value of 500. As you complete each of the remaining events think to yourself, "Does this event require more or less readjustment for a child than a gain of a new family member?". If you decide the readjustment is more intense and of longer duration, then choose a proportionately larger number and place it in the blank directly opposite the event in the column marked "VALUES."

If you decide the event represents less and shorter readjustment than a gain of a new family member, then indicate how much less by placing a proportionately smaller number in the column marked "VALUES." If the event is equal to a gain of a new family member in the degree of readjustment required, record the number 500 opposite the event in the column marked "VALUES."

EVENTS	VALUES
1. Gain of a new family member (e.g. through birth, adoption, oldster moving in, etc.)	500
2. Family breadwinner(s) having a lot more or a lot less trouble with the boss	_____
3. Family member detained in jail or other institution	_____
4. Death of either or both parents	_____
5. Major change in child's sleeping habits	_____
6. Death of close family member (other than parent)	_____
7. Major change in child's eating habits (e.g. a lot more or a lot less, or very different meal habits)	_____
8. Family experiencing a foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	_____
9. Change of child's personal habits (e.g. dress, manner, friends)	_____
10. Death of close friend(s) of child	_____
11. Family member being found guilty of minor violation of the law (e.g. traffic ticket, jaywalking, disturbing the peace)	_____
12. Outstanding personal achievement of family member	_____
13. Pregnancy within child's family	_____
14. Major change in the health or behavior of a family member	_____
15. Sexual difficulties of family member	_____
16. Major trouble with in-laws of family	_____
17. Major change in number of family get-togethers (e.g. a lot more or a lot less than usual)	_____
18. Major change in family's financial state (e.g. a lot worse or a lot better)	_____
19. Remarriage of child's parent(s)	_____
20. Change in residence	_____
21. Brother(s) or sister(s) leaving home (e.g. marriage, attending college, etc.)	_____
22. Marital separation of parents	_____
23. Major change in family's church activities (e.g. a lot more or a lot less than usual)	_____

EVENTS	VALUES
24. Marital reconciliation of parents	_____
25. Family breadwinner(s) being fired or terminated from work	_____
26. Divorce of member(s) of child's immediate family (other than parents)	_____
27. Divorce of child's parents	_____
28. Change to different line of work by either parent	_____
29. Major change in number of parental arguments (e.g. either a lot more or a lot less than usual regarding childrearing, personal habits, etc.)	_____
30. Major change in responsibilities of breadwinner(s) at work (e.g. promotion, demotion, lateral transfer)	_____
31. Mother beginning or ceasing work outside the home	_____
32. Major change in working hours or conditions on part of the family breadwinner(s)	_____
33. Major change in child's usual type and/or amount of recreation	_____
34. Family taking on a mortgage or loan less than \$10,000 (e.g. purchasing a car, T.V., freezer, etc.)	_____
35. Family taking on a mortgage or loan greater than \$10,000 (e.g. purchasing a home, business, etc.)	_____
36. Child experiencing a major personal injury or illness	_____
37. Family breadwinner(s) undergoing a major business readjustment (e.g. merger, bankruptcy, reorganization, etc.)	_____
38. Major change in family's social activities (e.g. clubs, movies, visiting, etc.)	_____
39. Major change in living conditions for the family (e.g. building a new home, remodeling, deterioration of home or neighborhood)	_____
40. Retirement of either or both parents	_____
41. Family vacation	_____
42. Changing to a new school	_____
43. Child beginning formal schooling (e.g. start first grade)	_____
44. Family member beginning or ceasing formal schooling (e.g. entering school, graduating, dropping out, etc.)	_____

CHILDREN'S SCHEDULE OF RECENT EXPERIENCES

DIRECTIONS:
 1. MARK CORRECT ANSWER WITH A NO. 2 PENCIL.
 2. DO NOT FOLD OR SEND THIS SHEET.

CHILD

CHART NO.

DO NOT MARK IN THESE SPACES

Relationship of person completing this questionnaire to child:

Mother Father Guardian or Adoptive Mother Other Guardian or Adoptive Father

How long have you known this child?
 1 2 3 4 YEARS 5 6 7 8 9+

Has this child had a major change in the usual type and/or amount of recreation year?
 YES NO

Has there a major change in the financial state of this child's family (not worse off or a lot better off than usual) this last year?
 YES NO

How many times has anyone in this child's family experienced detention in jail or another institution this last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

Has either or both parents of this child die last year?
 NO Yes, Father died Yes, Mother died Both Father and Mother died

Has there a pregnancy within this child's family this last year?
 YES NO

Has there been a major increase in the number of parental arguments this last year?
 YES NO

How many times has this child experienced major personal injury or illness last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

How many close friends of this child died last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

How many members of this child's family (other than either parent) have been lost by death during the last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

How many new members were added to this child's family (through birth, adoption, foster moving in, etc.) this last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

How many times last year was there a major change in the health or behavior of a family member other than this child?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

Did this child's parents get a divorce last year?
 YES NO

Did either or both of this child's parents remarry last year?
 NO Yes, Mother remarried Yes, Father remarried Both mother and father remarried

CARD NO. _____

00,000	10,000	20,000	30,000	40,000	50,000	60,000	70,000	80,000	90,000
0,000	1,000	2,000	3,000	4,000	5,000	6,000	7,000	8,000	9,000
000	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900
00	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

CHART NO. _____

14. How many times has this child's family moved (changed residence) this last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

15. Did either or both of this child's parents experience retirement from work last year?
 NO Father only Mother only Both Father and Mother

16. How many times was there a marital separation of this child's parents last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

17. How many times was there a marital reconciliation between this child's parents last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

18. How many brothers or sisters of this child left home (through marriage, attending college, etc.) last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

19. How many times last year was there a major change in working hours or conditions on the part of the breadwinner(s) of this child's family?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

20. How many times was the breadwinner(s) of this child's family fired (or terminated) from work last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

21. How many times last year did this child's mother (natural, guardian or adoptive mother) begin or cease working outside the home?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

22. How many times last year did this child change to a new school (including kindergarten)?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+

23. Did this child begin kindergarten or first grade this last year?
 YES NO

24. How many times was there a major change in living conditions for this child's family (building a new home, remodeling, deterioration of home) last year?
 None 1 2 3 4 5+