

Comprehensive Assessment of Triggers for Behaviours of Concern Scale (CATS)

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Background

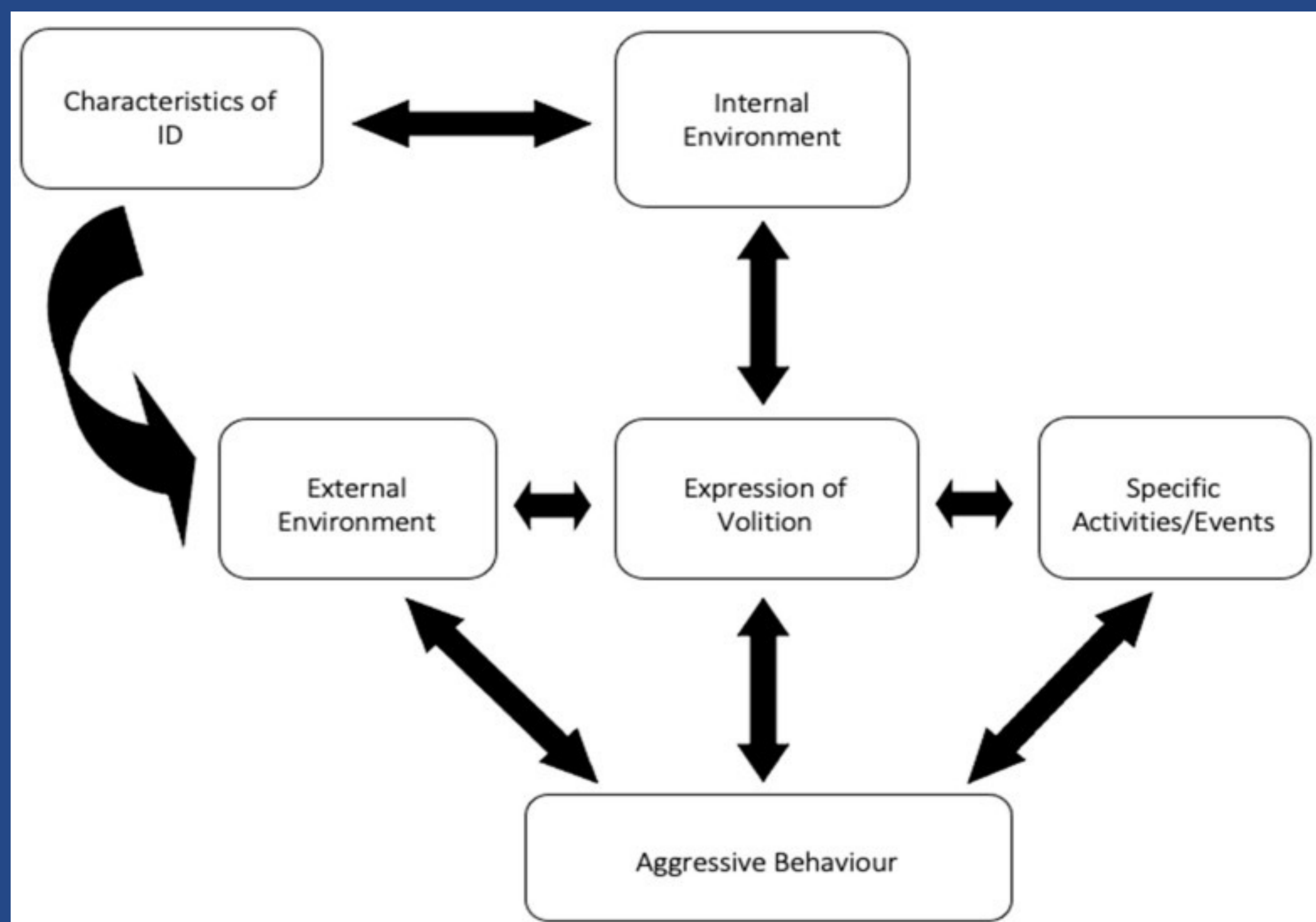
Behaviours of concern (BoC) may be displayed by many people with neurodevelopmental disorders such as intellectual disabilities or autism spectrum disorder (20-60%). BoC can be difficult to manage if caregivers do not understand the reasons for the behaviour. Identifying the contextual variables/triggers for the behaviour is likely to help undertake a functional analysis leading to a person-centred positive behaviour support plan.

Aims

We have developed a comprehensive triggers/contextual variables scale called Comprehensive Assessment of Triggers for behaviours of concern Scale (CATS).

Methods

CATS was developed in two stages. In stage 1, we used a 'bottom-up' approach, in which caregivers of adults with intellectual disabilities who show aggressive behaviour were interviewed to identify the triggers for aggression. In stage 2, using a 'top-down' approach, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to gather items from existing trigger checklists. Trigger items from both stages were combined and the duplicates were removed.



Schematic map of triggers and motivations for behaviours of concern identified by the caregivers

Results

In stage 1, 168 contextual variables were identified which were categorised under five main themes (internal environment (within the person), external environment (outside of the person), expression of volition, characteristics of intellectual disabilities, and specific activities/events) and 12 subthemes. The highest number of items mentioned by the caregivers fell in the categories of external environment (n = 92) and internal environment (n = 76). In stage 2, 20 articles were selected for inclusion. Six published scales were found related to contextual variables and another five related to functional assessment. The final list in CATS consists of 333 contextual triggers categorised under five main domains and 12 subdomains (<https://spectrom.wixsite.com/project>). CATS can be used by caregivers to identify triggers or antecedents of BoC.

Conclusions

CATS is easy to use by the caregivers and does not require any specific training. Further work is needed to assess its psychometric properties, utility, applicability, and acceptability.