

SHORTNED VISUO-SPATIAL QUESTIONNAIRE: AN USEFUL TOOL FOR THE EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN WITH NON VERBAL SYNDROME LIVING IN RURAL AREAS

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Visuo-spatial deficits interfere with learning geography, geometry, natural sciences, drawing, arithmetic calculation and can also play a crucial role in the acquisition of reading and writing abilities. In order to identify early students with low non verbal abilities, Cornoldi, Venneri, Marconato, Molin & Montinari (2003) have proposed a questionnaire for teachers, the so called Shortened Visuo-Spatial Questionnaire (SVS). However, this tool has been validated in urban contexts mainly located in North-East Italy.

Present research was aimed to investigate whether the SVS can identify children with low visuo-spatial abilities living in Sardinian rural areas. Experiment 1 was aimed to verify the reliability of the assessments of visuo-spatial abilities of 8-11 years aged children attending two primary schools in the province of Nuoro done by the teachers that used the SVS questionnaire. Results show that the questionnaire by Cornoldi et al. (2003) is a reliable tool for the early identification of children with scarce visuo-spatial abilities living in agropastoral cultural contexts. Finally, Experiment 2 was aimed to investigate which variables predict SVS scores. Results show that children chronological age and teachers previous educational experience predict the accuracy level of students visuo-spatial functions which were assessed by the teachers using the SVS questionnaire. In conclusion the SVS is an useful tool for the early identification of children with Non Verbal Syndrome, a disability that can cause low self-esteem and depression in children and adolescent with visuo-spatial learning problems