

Winner

The Paediatric Aussie Chocolate Poo Scale

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The Bristol Stool Scale (BSS) was developed 30 years ago, with the aim of determining the range of bowel habits including stool types in the adult population.¹ We conducted a PubMed search (All Fields), which identified more than 600 published papers associated with the BSS. The BSS is currently the gold standard to classify stool consistency in adults. In its present form, it has been useful in assessing intestinal transit time;² the longer the time, the lower the stool number (eg, type 1 has the slowest transit time [constipation]; type 7 has the fastest transit time [diarrhoea]) (Box 1). The form of the stool strongly influences the act of defecation. The need to strain increases as the type number goes down, and the feeling of urgency increases as the type number rises.¹ Feelings of incomplete evacuation occur quite often in normal individuals if their stool is at either end of the scale, but rarely if the stool is type 3 or 4.

Children with recurrent abdominal pain (CRAP) have been assessed using the BSS.³ However, it appears that the BSS is not as valid in infants and young children. Over the years, other scales have been developed for use in paediatric patients with mixed success. The Amsterdam Stool Scale (ASS) incorporated new components to include information








on stool colour and stool volume.⁴ The ASS appears to be more appropriate for use among infants, but it has been suggested that it is too complex for routine use and it is not commonly used by health care professionals.⁴ Recently, the Brussels Infant Toddler Stool Scale (BITSS) was developed and compared with the BSS.⁵ The conclusion was that the BITSS and BSS “behave differently”. The BITSS was better at detecting hard stools and functional constipation than the BSS.⁵

It is understandable that the BSS works well in the adult population and that parents assessing infant and toddler poo may not undertake the process of assessing their child’s poo in detail as it is gross and smelly. Perhaps the problem is one of interpretation? So, why not let children assess their own poo using something that is familiar to them — chocolate. Not so gross, is it? In Australia, we have chocolate bars that match each type of poo on the original BSS. We propose a new stool scale based on different types of chocolates that match the BSS (Box 2). We believe that this provides a very close match in terms of faecal form, colour, and stool consistency. Not so much on smell. The Paediatric Aussie Chocolate Poo Scale (PACPS) may serve a practical purpose to assist parents and health

1 The Bristol Stool Scale (BSS)

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on the surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces, entirely liquid

2 The Paediatric Aussie Chocolate Poo Scale (PACPS)

Type 1		Maltesers
Type 2		Picnic
Type 3		Chokito
Type 4		Boost
Type 5		Peanuts
Type 6		Flake
Type 7		Melted chocolate

care professionals in obtaining important information about stool consistency from children with recurrent abdominal pain, irritable bowel syndrome, or constipation disorders. The instrument requires validation, and future studies should be conducted to determine if eating these specific types of

chocolate actually produces the same types of stool as those listed on the BSS.

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