*Aim*

People with severe and multiple disabilities often use switches to control their assistive technology for activities including play, recreation, communication, education, mobility, work and independence in the home environment. We developed the Switch Access Measure (known to its user as SAM) to address the lack of standardised, reliable and valid measures to evaluate users’ success in operating their prescribed switching technology.

*Development and validation*

SAM is an activity-based assessment that was developed through an iterative, expert-informed process to evaluate user’s switching ability on 16 skills (6 motor, 2 visual, and 8 process), providing:

* Identification of abilities, challenges and opportunities for technology improvement/intervention planning/training
* Comparison of different switching set-ups to help determine which to pursue
* Evaluation of performance changes over time with a given switch/es.

Our validation study assessed SAM’s inter-/intra-rater reliability and ease of use. Two occupational therapists with switch access assessment/intervention experience were trained by SAM developers to be study assessors. Each independently scored SAM while viewing study assessment videos of 20 children doing an individually-selected goal-based activity/ies with their switching technology. Their scores were compared with the SAM developers’ scores (reliability benchmarking). Inter- and intra-reliability were excellent and ease of use highly rated. A SAM training/certification course was developed incorporating learnings from this reliability work. The first course, delivered in Adelaide 27-28 April 2018, trained 11 occupational therapists, 5 speech pathologists, and a rehabilitation engineer/researcher.

*Conclusion*

SAM has strong reliability and ease of scoring, and fills a longstanding measurement gap in the field of switch access technology.

Total word count = 250