Reviewer’s report

Title: Reliability and validity of the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) for detecting perinatal common mental disorders (PCMDs) among women in low- and lower-middle-income countries: A systematic review

Version: 0 Date: 23 Sep 2015

Reviewer: Pamela Pilkington

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript addresses the need for accurate detection of perinatal common mental disorders (PCMDs) in resource-constrained settings to facilitate early detection and treatment. In Western English-speaking countries, the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) is one of the most widely-used and validated screening tools for symptoms of perinatal depression and anxiety. Nonetheless, local language versions of the EPDS have demonstrated lower validity than the original. The authors make a valuable contribution to the literature by developing and applying process-based criteria to evaluate the translation and validation of local language versions of the EPDS. The findings will facilitate the development of more reliable and valid local language screening tools for PCMDs.

The following revisions may improve the quality of the manuscript.

Major revisions

1. The Method section does not refer to the review being conducted in accordance with the PRISMA protocol, but a PRISMA flow-diagram is provided in Figure 2. It is not clear whether the authors followed the PRISMA protocol. If it was followed, the manuscript could be improved by providing the relevant information in the Abstract and Method, and appending the PRISMA checklist as supplementary material.

2. A breakdown of the number of articles excluded, and the reasons, should be provided in Figure 2.

3. The strengths and limitations of the review warrant further exploration in the Discussion. For example, although the authors note that excluding articles published in languages other than English may have resulted in relevant papers being omitted, this is not sufficiently explored or expanded upon, and a convincing rationale for excluding non-
English manuscripts is not provided. The number of papers excluded because they were in a language other than English should be provided, and the potential disadvantages of this exclusion criterion should be acknowledged.

4. Given that the authors refer to specific EPDS items by their number throughout the results section, it may be useful to provide readers with a table listing the original English-language EPDS items.

5. It is not clear to me what is meant by 'proper informed consent' or how this differs from other types of informed consent. The authors could consider providing more detailed supplementary material (e.g., the definitions for each criterion), to facilitate application of the process-based criteria in future translation studies.

6. The authors note that "only two studies had translated the Western structured instruments used for diagnostic interviews into local languages" but do not expand upon this point. Evaluating the precision of a LLV-EPDS against an English-language diagnostic interview seems counter-intuitive. I wonder if the authors could comment on whether this may influence the validation of LLV-EPDS.

7. The authors note that "The resulting LLV-EPDS showed comparable levels of sensitivity and specificity to the English EPDS, even though these studies had not met most of our recommended steps for culturally sensitive translation processes" - Given that this is in conflict with the premise of the article, I wonder if the authors could comment on possible reasons for this.

8. The authors report considerable variation in the cut-off points used by the different studies but do not comment on the possible implications. This is despite evidence that variability in the use of cut-off scores for the English EPDS has implications for clinical and research practice (Matthey, Henshaw, Elliott, & Barnett, 2006). The authors could comment on the potential implications of the variability in cut-off scores.

Minor revisions

1. The manuscript could be improved by clarifying in the Abstract that the process-based criteria were developed by the authors, as I think this is a major strength of the study. The criteria are referred to as "new" but it is not immediately obvious that the authors actually developed the criteria for the purposes of this review. Similarly, the final sentence of the introduction describes one of the aims of the study as "to use process-based criteria", but this wording obscures the fact that the authors developed the criteria.

2. The conclusion finishes somewhat abruptly. The authors could insert a final sentence that emphasises the strengths of this research. E.g., This approach will facilitate the development of more precise and validated screening tools for CPMDs…

3. Please consider the following suggestions regarding written expression and phrasing.
a. Compound adjectives are inconsistently hyphenated. E.g., low-income versus low income, cut offs versus cut-offs, self report versus self-report, process based versus process-based, peer reviewed versus peer-reviewed etc. Please insert hyphens where needed so that the spelling is consistent throughout.

b. There is inconsistent phrasing around self-report measures. Sometimes they are referred to as self-reporting. In my opinion, 'self-report' is preferable, as it is more commonly used than 'self-reporting'. Please change the spelling to be consistent.

c. The use of the word 'enrolment' instead of 'recruitment' sounds unusual to me, and could be rephrased.

d. The phrase 'perinatal women' in Box 2 could be reworded as it is inconsistent with the person-centred wording that is used in the remainder of the manuscript.

e. Numbers are inconsistently written as words and numerals, without seeming to follow any rule. According to APA, use words to express any number that begins a sentence, title, or text heading. Use numerals to express numbers 10 and above, and use words to express numbers below 10. Use numerals to express units of time, dates, ages, and numbers that denote a specific place in a numbered series.

f. Some phrasing could be revised to avoid redundancy. E.g., "had reported altering" \( \rightarrow \) altered "…carried out" \( \rightarrow \) conducted.

g. Line 33 of page 1 - "fixed-choice items" \( \rightarrow \) Likert-scale items

h. "For improving early detection…" \( \rightarrow \) To improve early detection and treatment of PCMDS, the local language versions of the EPDS (LLV-EPDS) need to accurately…

i. "In two studies, the focus was on..." \( \rightarrow \) Two of these focused on publications from high- and middle-income countries, and included few studies from low-income countries.

j. "Similarly, item 10 (relating to suicidal ideation) was rephrased into format in the Vietnamese version" - Is there a word missing?

k. "There were similarities but also differences in the items modified" - consider rewriting to improve clarity. It is not clear whether this means that there was overlap in which items were modified in the different versions, but there were also items that were modified in one study but not others.

l. "…to appraise systematically" \( \rightarrow \) to systematically appraise

m. "size of participant groups" \( \rightarrow \) sample sizes

n. "Only study used a committee approach" \( \rightarrow \) Only one study used a committee approach
o. "on the self-harm" --＞□ on self-harm

p. "…due to inclusion of two studies from each of five countries" --＞□ due to the inclusion of two studies from five countries? Unclear.

q. "who actually did have a mental disorder" --＞□ who had a mental disorder according to a diagnostic interview

References


Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:
1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal