Reviewer’s report

Title: Telephone and face to face methods of assessment of veteran’s community reintegration yield equivalent results

Version: 1 Date: 11 April 2011

Reviewer: Josep Garre-Olmo

Reviewer’s report:

Review report

The manuscript analyzes the equivalence of a telephone –based version of the Community Re-integration of Service Members (CRIS) questionnaire. This study should be considered as a psychometric analysis of the validity of two versions of a questionnaire. Thus, if the in-person CRIS is considered as the gold standard, the authors need to assess the concurrent criterion validity, this is, the prediction of an alternative method of measuring a variable (the telephone-based measure). This information must be included in the objectives. The study is well conducted, however, there are some points that the authors should take into account.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Abstract results section is very scarce. This section should include some demographic information of the participants and include the 95% confidence intervals of the Intraclass Correlation Coefficients (ICC).

2. The introduction is attractive but needs to be shortened. The issues related to the differences between telephone and in-person administration might be treated in more detail in the discussion section taking into account the study results.

3. The authors should make explicit a priori hypotheses for the expected association between telephone and in-person scores of the CRIS.

4. The authors should to explicit why the sample size was of 102 subjects. There was some sample size calculation? If not, it could be appropriate to inform about the statistical power and the effect size.

5. In the Methods sections the authors must include information of each registered variable. For example, in results section, there is information related to depression diagnosis, PDS diagnosis (¿?),…This information was obtained after a medical chart review?

6. Which version of the ICC was used? (i.e. one-way or two-way, random or mixed effects). 95% confidence intervals of ICC must be included in all the ICC reported.

7. To assess the effect of the order of administration, the authors could use the Bland & Altman methodology (Bland JM, Altman DG. Comparing two methods of
clinical measurement: a personal history. Int J Epidemiol 1995;24 Suppl 1:S7-14) to assess graphically whether the difference between the two measures was (in-person and telephone-based) related to the magnitude of the measure.

8. In the results section, the authors state that demographics were similar between groups. The p- values of the comparison analyses between groups should be included in table 1.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. All the abbreviation used in the manuscript should be defined the first time they appear (including in tables using a footnote)

2. Table two has no information related to the groups (telephone or in-person) and is not possible to identify the score value of each group.

Discretionary revisions
None

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests