Reviewer’s report

Title: Developing a scale to measure family dynamics related to long-term care, and testing that scale in a multicenter cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 2 October 2013

Reviewer: Guido Miccinesi

Reviewer’s report:

Interesting, clear, useful and very simple. I agree with the Authors’ conclusion: while the scale might be improved and further validation studies could be useful, the IF-Long holds promise as a toll for primary care practice.

The topic is hot and family practice seems to be the right audience for the Authors clinical ideas and to appreciate/evaluate the suggested items of the new scale.

It is more a clinical tool than a psychometric one, so I am satisfied with the very simple analyses presented.

But: a few added specifications are needed to make the instrument and the paper fully comprehensible.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

In the methods section it must be specified how the tool is used, as it is said in the discussion (primary care physician with a longstanding relationship with the patient and the family).

It is not clear how the IF-Long score is computed: is it the mean of the single item score (without any weight), as I suppose looking at the results? how does it happen that the mean for single items are around 1.5 and that for the total score is around 0.6? Give some more details to understand, please.

The alpha Cronbach is largely unsufficient to give us a measure of the reliability of the tool; at least a test re-test analysis would have been welcome; I think this must be explicitly said in discussion.

If I understood well, the measuring of FIM and of the goodness of relationship with the patient were completely independent from that of the IF-Long. This is a point of strength of the validation study and I suggest to highlight it in the discussion section.

Discretionary Revisions

I suggest the following:

figure 1: it would be useful to specify that the numbers on y axis are absolute numbers and not percentages, it is possible to misunderstand as it is now there are not reported results on the association between the IF-LOng and
economic situation, kin relationship, living together: I expect interesting results on these issues; are they reserved for other publications? could they be added here to make more interesting this validation study? are they null associations?
the four items, very interesting, are really different one form the other, so I expect also different association with the other variables collected (see above): are there some results that could be added here?

thank you for reviewing your simple, practical and interesting work

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests