Reviewer’s report

Title: Validation of the Spiritual Distress Assessment Tool in older hospitalized patients

Version: 1 Date: 25 November 2011

Reviewer: Josep Garre-Olmo

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting manuscript that assesses the main psychometric properties of a new instrument for the assessment of the spiritual distress, the Spiritual Distress Assessment Tool (SDAT). The conceptual development of the SDAT previously published indicates appropriate face validity, and the next step is to demonstrate the reliability and criterion validity. The introduction section is brief, concise, and accurate. The bibliographic references are appropriate. The introduction section achieves the rationale for the research. The study is well conducted; however, it would be of interest to have additional information and clarification, and the manuscript need some revisions.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Assumptions for sample size calculation need to be explicit.
2. 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 (missing for the test-retest reliability - pag. 11).
3. The factor analysis procedure should be explained in more detail. How was assessed the factor solution accuracy? Face validity of potential dimensions? Eigenvalues higher than 1? Or Cattell’s scree plot? A table including factor loading for each factor would be very informative.
4. In the results section the authors shown results from a multivariate analysis related to the odds of occurrence of a family meeting for discharge planning adjusted for age, gender, functional and depressive status. This analysis is not described in the methods section. It was a bivariate logistic regression?
5. In the discussion section it could be interesting to discuss the characteristics of the factor structure of the SDAT in relation to the factor structure of other instruments related to assess patient’s spirituality.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The analysis of the test-retest reliability is somewhat limited. The authors assessed the test-retest reliability of the same observer and not of the measurement procedure. This must be specified in methods. Besides, the limited number of cases (n=4) limits the statistical analysis power.

Discretionary revisions

1. All the abbreviations used in the abstract should be defined the first time they
appear (i.e. MMSE, FACIT-Sp, GDS, ICC).

**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.