Reviewer's report

Title: Validation of the Arabic version of the Cohen Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)

Version: 1 Date: 8 October 2010

Reviewer: david roe

Reviewer's report:

In this paper the authors presented their evaluation of the validity of the Arabic translation of the Cohen Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) in pregnant and postpartum women.

Following are a number of comments:

1. Page 3 first paragraph: references are needed.

2. Page 3 second paragraph: in the first paragraph the authors write about stress in general, while in the second paragraph they turn the focus to measuring stress in pregnancy. A presentation of stress in pregnancy is needed before discussing measures of perceived stress during pregnancy. Moreover, the sentence "Concerns about economic insecurity, breastfeeding, and bonding with the infant can contribute to the stress often experienced during this period" should be elaborated upon within the context of measuring perceived stress during pregnancy. The authors should consider revising the entire paragraph.

3. Page 3 paragraph 3: In the first sentence, while mentioning the "few validated tools"- references are needed to support the claim. In this regards, when presenting the PSS-10, a ref is also needed. It seems that this paragraph should come after the current fourth paragraph on page 3.

4. Page 4 paragraph 2: this paragraph should not stand by its own. It is too short and does not hold for new idea. Did the authors meant to write "mainly"? And by mistake they wrote "namely"?

5. Page 4 paragraph 3: References are needed in order to support the claim regarding the translation into different languages and the validation issue.

6. Page 5 first paragraphs- the last sentence ("However, some of these studies reported a good level of reliability with internal consistency of the PSS-10 scale ranging from 0.71 to 0.8") is repetitive as the same info has been already presented in the previous paragraph.

7. Page 5 participants' description: The authors should further explain in the introduction the meaning of the different pregnancy trimesters since they mention it in this paragraph, while not explaining it before. Also, the description of the sample composition and the dropout rates should be separately discussed. Currently, the discussion of these issues is mixed and thus confusing. Were the students pregnant? Were they mothers? Or did they serve as a control group??
This point needs clarification. Moreover, if 2 students refuse to participate, how was the response rate 100%?? The mentioning of the "retest" in this paragraph is unclear and I couldn’t understand where, logically, it stem from.

The whole participants' paragraph should be rewritten and edited. A lot of info is missing and it is not presented in a well organized manner. Also, the procedure part should be presented in a more clear manner, so the reader will be able to understand what the authors did.

8. Page 7, administration paragraph: Was the study approved by an ethical review committee?

9. Usually, SES is measured by presenting participants the average income per person/family in the country and asking him/her to indicate its location on the income scale (below average, more than average etc). Asking women whether their income is sufficient or not is not an accepted form for measuring SES, and thus can't serve or presented by the authors as a SES measure.

10. The method part requires extensive editing. A well detailed description of the research groups is needed, as well as an organization of the method part according to the accepted form of manuscript method part: participation, instrument and procedure. In the instrument part the description of all the scales should be presented, along with an explanation of how and why the 7 negative life events were chosen, known reliability and the reliability the authors have found in the current study should be reported.

11. Page 7 second paragraph- please explain what you meant by writing: "A sub sample of the participants was chosen at random and asked to consent to a retest after one week".

12. Page 8, reliability paragraph: why 41 (15.3%) of the sample participated at time 2 assessment?? An explanation is needed. Also, the authors should explain this high dropout rate in time 2.

13. Pages 8 and 9, data analysis: a reference to the appropriate tables is missing in the text.

14. Page 10, factor analysis: The authors should add a table of the items content for each factor.

15. Page 12, Discussion: the test re-test should not be presented in an explicit way as it is presented now, since this test was done only on 15% of the sample.

16. Page 13 second paragraph- were the students recruited from a college or a university? Please be consistent with the wording and terms throughout the manuscript.