Reviewer's report

Title: Psychometric Properties of the Chinese Craving Beliefs Questionnaire for Heroin Abusers in Methadone Treatment

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Reviewer: carla maria gramaglia

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The nature of drug craving and its role in the addictive process is a debated issue in the addiction sciences, with disputes regarding its definition, assessment, and interpretation. Craving is usually viewed as a subjective experience and therefore is assessed with self-report scales. Tiffany et al. (2000) have criticized the use of unidimensional, single-item scales, arguing about the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon and its complex relationship with drug use and relapse.

Easy and quick to administer multidimensional instruments for the assessment of cravings are required and could help resolving the theoretical debate regarding this issue. Moreover, these measures of subjective drug craving may have clinical implications, helping to predict relapse and evaluating psychological and pharmacological treatment of abusers.

One strength of the paper is the lack of studies concerning this issue in Chinese culture. The authors accomplish their objective, which was to create a short and easy to administer assessment instrument with good psychometric properties.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Background

The authors describe methadone treatment, research about craving and the lack of Chinese tools, then methadone treatment again and the unavailability of instruments for assessing craving in Mandarin. More order is required in the description of these issues. Furthermore, less details about methadone treatment and more details about the instruments for the assessment of craving and the explanation of their choice of the Craving Belief Questionnaire would be useful. For example, the authors should mention the recent review by Rosenberg (Clinical and laboratory assessment of the subjective experience of drug craving. Clinical Psychology review 2009:29:519-534) and explain their choice of the CBQ instead of the HCQ, for example.

Method

The participation of volunteers only may bias results. The reimbursement for participation, albeit minimal, is questionable.

Why was the additional sample of 51 patients selected from a different outpatient treatment program?

Sixty of the 505 methadone treatment users either did not complete due CCBQ...
or dropped out. It would be interesting to know how many of these 60 did not
complete the questionnaire and to understand what rendered it difficult for them,
since the items are designed to be easy to score and understand and the
administration of the CCBQ takes only about 10 minutes.

Limitations
Sample was not randomly selected (the authors discuss this issue).
The sample was restricted to Chinese patients living in Taiwan and so the
resulting CCBQ structure may not be generalized to other ethnic groups (the
authors discuss this issue).

Minor Essential Revisions
Check the editing of the reference list (bold characters for article titles missing in
ref 12-13).
The reference of the CBQ is cited in the text but missing in the list.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

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