Reviewer's report

Title: Psychometric properties of the Flemish translation of the NEECHAM Confusion Scale

Version: 2 Date: 28 February 2005

Reviewer: Elisabeth Hamrin

Reviewer's report:

General
The manuscript has now been corrected on most points according to this reviewer. The methodology is clearly explained and clarifications have been done concerning especially the way the sample was chosen. The major difficulty with this study is the drop outs of the original sample of 54 on the different test occasions, which forces the investigators to use the aggregated observations of the 5 test occasions. Since the headings in all the tables now are complete concerning the 54 participants and the 194 test occasions, the reader has a satisfying information. The ROC-curve - new for this reviewer - together with the other statistical investigations give the proper information which is possible from the material. The discussion and conclusions are appropriate.
Concerning the discussion if the physiological items "vital" and "oxygen" could be deleted, one could have different opinions. Since I have visited the constructor Virginia Neelon in the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and her laboratory, I know that the physiological parts of the NEECHAM Confusion Scale are essential. In both the study by Neelon et al 1996 and the present study, the physiological items land in their own factor. The study by Johansson et al 2002, also on patients after hip fracture, present three factors where vital function and oxygen saturation are two separate factors and one factor consists of the other seven items. This is also a logical solution. The physiological parts of the scale add information of clinical importance especially for elderly who often have multi-illnesses.

All together, the investigation by Koen Milisen et al adds important information about the NEECHAM Confusion Scale not only on the Flemish version. I agree with the investigators that further validation should be used on different clinical populations. Hip fracture patients, however, are very common and a very important group, where the trauma per se could cause confusion. Hopefully, further research on the NEECHAM Confusion Scale might be performed on a multi-centre basis within different language areas.

Elisabeth Hamrin
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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

There is no financial interest from this reviewer concerning 4 first points above. Concerning the non-financial competing interest, as you already know, I am the co-author of the paper by Johansson et al 2002. We do not look at the work done concerning the Flemish edition of the score as any type of competition. We are very happy to know that other research groups are working with the NEECHAM instrument and we would be interested to have contact in the future with Koen Milisen and her project group.