Reviewer’s report

Title: Psychiatric Rating Scales In Urdu: A Systematic Review

Version: 1 Date: 29 August 2007

Reviewer: Toshiaki A Furukawa

Reviewer’s report:

General

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

1. The essential requirements for a “good” rating scale are, in the order of logical sequence,
   1) Cross-cultural equivalence in the case of translated scales
   2) Reliability
   3) Criterion validity

One should also pay attention to content validity and to construct validity but for the sake of the present review, it is defensible if the authors concentrated on criterion validity only. However, the authors should explicitly note the importance of reliability. This is not part of criterion validity. Reliability sets the upper limit to criterion validity.

2. So, Table 1 should deal with cross-cultural equivalence (backtranslation, translation committee, pre-testing, validation population, linguistic equivalence, conceptual equivalence, scale equivalence) for 5 translated scales.

3. Then, Table 2 may list these 5 as well as other indigenously developed scales, and their reliability and validity coefficients.

4. Now, validation coefficients are quite different for screening/diagnostic instruments and severity-rating instruments. As many of the ones identified belong to the former, it is OK to list up sensitivity, specificity etc.

5. However, for the latter the criterion validity coefficients are usually some kind of correlation coefficients with the golden standard. WHO QOL is not a screening or diagnostic instrument (one could even argue that this does not measure psychiatric symptom, and hence belong to the other group of scales that the authors claim that they have not examined closely.)

6. It is quite curious that the authors list HRSD, MADRS, BDI, PANSS in the second paragraph of the Discussion. They do not appear in tables. If there are Urdu versions of these scales, they should be listed and their validity coefficients (they are not Se, Sp etc) should be tabulated.

7. The authors also need to discuss how validated these scales are. Were they
all well validated or were some not so well? They are listed in the Table but the authors need certainly discuss their findings.

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

1. Does PsycINFO date back to 1806?
2. What is PAS in Table 3?

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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:

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