Reviewer's report

Title: The Brief version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE): translation and validation study of the Iranian version

Version: 1 Date: 16 December 2008

Reviewer: Sanna Kuusikko

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer’s comments.

The Research article “The Brief version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE): translation and validation study of the Iranian version”. I think it is important to have validated questionnaires for different languages as well as for different cultures and that is why this study is important. However, my opinion is that Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached) are needed before publication. The credit of the study is a large non-clinical and clinical sample.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Authors explained translation process of the BFNE and made some data analysis regarding its validity and reliability. In the abstract authors conclude that this is a preliminary validation study and I think it should be written in the title as well. Are authors going to publish another validation study with more information? However, if authors would run more data analyses, word “preliminary” could be removed.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
Methods are appropriate (correlations, Cronbach´s alpha, Independent sample t-test). However, I would like to see more statistical methods used, e.g. ROC analyse and calculations of the estimated risk (OR). If there are known clinical cut-offs of used questionnaires (SIAS, SPIN), they could be used as a “golden standard” to estimate clinical cut-off of Iranian version of BFNE. Also original cut-off of BFNE could be compared Iranian cut-off. Also data could be divided into quartiles and check if the same subjects fall in the same quartile with different questionnaire (i.e., if subjects fall in the highest quartile on BFNE, does (s)he also fall in the highest quartile on SIAS). Section Statistical analysis could be written more clearly (e.g., I do not understand what sentence “Reliability of the BFNE was assessed in a sample of nonclinical individuals using the SPSS 13 software.” means. It does not say which method was used to evaluate the reliability.

3. Are the data sound?
Both non-clinical and clinical samples are large and would enable more statistical analyses. I would like to read more about the procedure of the data collection.
Did clinical sample complete SIAS and SPIN?

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Yes.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes they are.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes. However, the full name of the SPIN and SIAS should be written in the abstract and explained in the abstract’s method section. What do authors mean with the sentence in the abstract’s result section: “..BFNE was found to be acceptable to almost all participants”?

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   I am not native English speaking. However, I would like that some native English speaking/translator would go thru the manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1) Statistical analysis
   -page 6, line 4: how was the reliability of the BFNE assessed?

2) Results:
   -page 6, line 5: who were interviewed? Clinical sample?
   -page 7, line 3: do authors mean with sociodemographic variables age, gender and year in college or something else? What background info was asked from clinical sample? weren’t there difference e.g. in the completed years in the college or gender?
   -page 7, line 11: Was the test-retest done for the clinical sample? Could they be reported separately for both samples?

   - as mentioned, it would be interesting to see Receiver Operating Characteristic curve which is a graphical approach to plot the sensitivity versus 1-specificity for each possible cut off, and to join the points. The ROC method is perhaps most useful when comparing two or more competing methods. Also, Area Under the Curve (AUC), which is a measure of the probability of correct identification is presented along with sensitivity, specificity and likelihood ratios could be
reported.

Minor Essential Revisions:
1) Title page:
   - remove number 2 from the 42department of psychology, Payame Noor University
2) Abstract:
   - line 9-10: What do authors mean by “. . to be acceptable to almost all participants.”?
3) Background:
   - page 3, line 3: Persistent should be with small p
   - page 3, line 8: reverse word order to “. . it is also the most commonly diagnosed anxiety disorder . . ”
   - page 4, line 4 and 5: add references.
4) Methods:
   - page 5, line 4: extremely -> Extremely
   - page 5, line 9: do not write the full name of the SPIN
   - page 6, line 6: add reference after “. . social phobia subjects . . ”
   - page 5, line 5: Add the whole names and references of the SPIN and SIAS, as they are mentioned for the first time.
   - page 5, line 7-8: do you know the mean age of the clinical sample? If yes, please add here.
   - page 5, line 9: Inclusion -> inclusion. Does it mean that clinical sample was selected via interview or that their received diagnose via this interview?
   - page 6, line 8: Add what kind of reliability and validity recent study indicates. Good? Satisfactory?
   - page 6, line 8: Add publishing year for the reference 10.
   - page 6, line 9: Remove the full name of the SIAS

Discretionary revisions:
1) Abstract:
   - line 6: could you add mean ages for the samples?
2) Methods:
   - page 4, line 11: What does “brief in-class presentation” mean?
   - page 5, line 1-2: Is it relevant to know that most of the participants were studied bachelor’s degree? How does that affect to the results?
3) Measures:
   - it would be clearer, if there would be titles for every questionnaire.
4)should there be a “procedure” section?
5) Results:

- page 7, line 7: Table 1 is not needed: all info is clearly written in the text.
- page 7, line 16: Table 2 is not needed. Authors could just add in the text something like “In addition, also the SIAS and the SPIN correlated significantly (r = .68, p < .001).”

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests