Reviewer's report

Title: Validation of a Self-Administered Questionnaire to Assess Bullying in a Highly Violent Mexican Communities

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Reviewer: Alfgeir Logi Kristjansson

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BMC Review
Validation of a Self-Administered Questionnaire to Assess Bullying in a Highly Violent Mexican Communities

Reviewer comments
This paper attempts to describe the validation of a measure instrument to assess adolescent bullying in a Mexican population. Whereas I believe this measure tool has good potential and I appreciate that measurement reliability and validity is a relatively lengthy process I have several concerns about this report that have to be addressed for me to recommend publication.

The most important concerns are 1) the narrative in the introduction, methods and discussion sections that I often found very hard to follow and frankly was lost on several occasions. I understand that this may be due to the English spelling and grammar and I urge the authors to acquire assistance with their narrative in addition to overall spelling, grammar and word order. As an example the title of the paper mixes singular and plural text. 2) The second point concerns the overall assumption that this report deems the scale reliable and valid, which it does not. In order for the scale to become reliable and valid its assessment needs to be carried out in multiple populations. 3) Related to the second point, a measurement invariance analysis in different groups needs to be carried out. Only after that can we be sure that the questions have the same meaning to respondents in all populations. It goes without saying that a single test in a particular town in one country cannot account for a full reliability and validity assessment. This paper is merely the first to demonstrate the potential utility of the measure.

Specific points follow the order of sections in the paper

Title

Needs alterations in line with comments above.

Abstract

Conclusion needs to be updated in line with previous comments.

Throughout it is not clear how “violent communities” are defined. This is central to the arguments put forth in the paper that addresses bullying in “violent communities” that therefore need to be clearly defined.
Introduction

A clearer definition of “bullying” would be welcomed in the paper.

Mid of page 3: Sentence beginning with “Moderate (56%)..” refers to Peruvian adolescents that I cannot recognize. The sentence is also hard to understand.

Last sentence of first paragraph: The terms “suffered from aggressions” is another term that needs clarification.

Frist sentence in paragraph 2 (“Structured and unstructured…”), odd context that needs clarification.

Lines 3 and 4 on page 4 (“However, the associated..”), odd context that I cannot understand.

Overall the introduction is very hard to follow. Many sentences are not connected to one another and the flow of the text is never smooth.

Methods

Under “Design and Instrumentation”. Somehow it appears to me that 8+1=10? Please explain.

Under “Questionnaire and scale development”: “previously trained researchers”, please clarify.

Last sentence: “Given the multiple option…” is not understandable.

Top of page 6: I would welcome more and clearer information about the representativeness of the sample.

Mid of page 6: Not clear what “students were selected by simple random technique” means.

Validation

I have never heard of “Appearance validity”. Please clarify.

Ending sentences with words such as “among other things” should be discouraged.

This whole paragraph is very hard to understand. I would recommend rewriting it totally.

Results

The result section is in my mind the clearest and best part of the manuscript and relatively easy to follow.

Discussion

Firsts sentence cannot stand as is and needs adjustment with other comments in mind.

Upper part of page 10: Sentence beginning with “On the other hand, due to the…” is not understandable as is and needs rewriting.

Mid of page 12: I could not understand the ratios.

Conclusions need to be change in line with other comments.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests