Reviewer's report

Title: The Healthy Lifestyle and Personal Control Questionnaire (HLPCQ): A novel tool for assessing the efficacy of stress management and health promotion interventions.

Version: 2
Date: 11 July 2014

Reviewer: Richard Tahtinen

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) Consider removing or replacing the text in first paragraph up until; To date, numerous....". In my opinion the text before this sentence is a little bit out of context or at least starts up the paper from a very wide angle.

2) This study would benefit from a more comprehensive, critical review of current measures used (which the authors evaluate as inadequate to detect lifestyle changes). By reviewing these measures and how the proposed novel tool will fill in the gaps, the authors would build a stronger case for the need for developing this new measurement tool.

3) The authors’ rationale behind the development of this new tool derives from their own experience within stress management research, suggesting that current measures or measures utilized in their previous research have not been adequate to detect changes in lifestyle. However, this part of the introduction should be more elaborate, clearly defining the authors' previous qualitative findings that suggest that stress management/health promotion interventions lead to changes in lifestyle that cannot be adequately measured by current quantitative measures.

4) The introduction is built on one main theme; measures used today to assess the degree of change in lifestyle in response to an intervention, are not adequate to capture the potential efficacy of that intervention. However, considering the methodology of the study, the authors are not really able to answer whether or not this new tool will be more adequate than current tools (to detect change over time). This is mainly due to two reasons. First, the new tool is not being tested with an actual sample exposed to an intervention (e.g. pre-post testing of the tool). Two, this new tool is not compared to current tools in order to evaluate whether or not they differ in their diagnostic sensitivity.

Method.

5) Why did the authors not perform a test-retest reliability assessment? Also, considering that the main theme in the introduction was stress management programs and the issue of measuring their efficacy on changing individual’s lifestyle, would it not have been optimal to assign individuals to these programs in order evaluate the new tool’s adequacy compared to current ones.
6) The test construction process should be explained in more detail along with some supporting evidence or rationale for the inclusion/formulation of items.

7) For the sleep quality measure; why was not a validated sleep quality scale utilized?

8) Maybe the authors could explain the reasoning behind the inclusion of SRRS in the analyses, and possible reasons why it did not associate significantly with any of the subscales?

Discussion and Conclusion

9) There are important aspects mentioned in the discussion that should have been introduced in the introduction (see also comments 10 and 11). For example in the first sentence in discussion the authors formulate the aim of the study in a different (perhaps more suitable) manner than was previously done in the introduction. Here the authors are not presenting the aim as to develop a more adequate measure to assess lifestyle change in response to an intervention (the efficacy of an intervention), rather merely to:

“…evaluate the psychometric properties of a novel questionnaire that examines several dimensions of daily living.”

10) Paragraph starting from row 262, “The novel idea behind this tool is…”, contains important aspects that may support the rationale behind the study and should thus be presented already in the introduction.

11) Furthermore starting from row 318, “A novel idea of the HLPCQ is Daily Routine (DR).”, a vital aspect which should be presented already in the introduction along with supporting evidence of the importance of this novel idea.

12) Due to the methodology of the study, the authors’ conclusion “The HLPCQ is a good tool for assessing the efficacy of future health-promoting interventions to improve individuals’ lifestyle and wellbeing.”, is beyond the findings of this paper. In order to conclude that the measure is an adequate tool and should be used by researchers, more elaborate analyses should be made (e.g. confirmatory factor analysis, optimally implemented through structural equation modelling). Also, in order to design a measure that is aimed for assessing change (over time) in an outcome in response to an intervention, the validation study needs to include individuals who actually were exposed to an intervention.

Minor Essential Revisions

Tables

13) I would suggest that the authors follow APA-style formatting when designing tables (labels and notes should not be inside the table, do not use vertical lines etc.)

Row 88 (second sentence in the paragraph) seems like something is missing from this sentence:

“…stress management programs in different of the population…”
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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

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