Reviewer's report

Title: Normative Data and Discriminative Properties Of Short Form 36 (SF-36) in Turkish Population

Version: 2 Date: 24 April 2006

Reviewer: Ute Ellert

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)

Generally, normative data are determined for a whole country and not just for a single city (see cited Lit. 18). The sample from which the data derive should be representative for the individual country. The title of the article as well as the sentence before the last one on page 3 and the first sentence on page 9 are suggesting, that population norms for Turkey are presented in the paper. The authors state in the first paragraph that the study population stands for a representative sample of the general, healthy, urban population. This argument can not be followed.

On several occasions, the results are compared with other developing countries. However, it is not explained, in which respect these other developing countries can be compared with the study population. Another explanation for the high SF-36 Scores could be the young and healthy study population, which most likely is not representative for Turkey.

It should be explained, how exactly the country-specific weights were determined, and why this was not done in a representative sample. The fact that the summary scores, which were determined using the Turkish factors, show a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 is caused by the underlying definition. It would have been much more informative to present the factor score coefficients, which could have been compared with those from other countries.

Due to the well known interactions between age, sex, social class and health related quality of life, it would have been appropriate to include multivariate models. In the method section the Bonferoni-Adjustment is noted, but at no other location in the article it is ever mentioned again.

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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)

It should be noted in the method section, which version of the SF-36 was used.
It should be mentioned, which statistical software has been used in the analyses.

Why didn’t the authors differentiate between unemployed (seeking employment) and not employed? The relationship between not employed and economic position “fair” and “good” should be elucidated.

In the method section only 12 diseases, in the results section 13 diseases are mentioned.

In table 1 the age distribution should be presented, since on page 8 it is stated that only 9% of the sample is over the age of 65.

In tables 4 and 6 it is not clear, if the American or the Turkish summary scores are meant.

In table 6 there is no mention of the influence of age or sex. It would be clearer if there were two table, separate by sex and controlled for age, or one table, but controlled for age and sex.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
The cited literature on the discriminative ability in developing countries is not very recent. There is more and more current literature published on this subject.

The title of the cited literature (12) should be translated into English.

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.