Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 14 May 2006

Reviewer: Giovanni Apolone

Reviewer's report:

General

The manuscript (Normative data and discriminant properties of the SF-36 in Turkish population) describes and discusses the results of cross-sectional survey carried out in a sample of Turkish citizens to assess the properties of the Turkish version of the Sf-36. Results were analysed either in the whole sample or according to some variables (that were identified with a-priori approach). Eventually, data were also compared to what expected using as reference some findings from USA published experiences. In general, Sf-36 has shown to be reliable (in terms of internal consistency) and scores (either from the 8 scales and from the two summary indexes) behaved in a predicted ways when descriptive and comparative (non parametric analysis of variance) analyses were carried out. Authors comments results suggesting that “..Sf-36 can be a valuable tool in Turkish population ...is also a promising measure for research on health inequalities...”.

The paper is well organized and well written, methods and findings are clearly described, presented and discussed. The new findings offered about the performance of the Sf-36 in this specific sample add evidence about the robustness of the tool in different settings. Nevertheless, the added value of this study is questionable, mainly for an international audience as, at the best, it can be said that well-known methods (previously used by a plethora of other researchers in other settings) have been well correctly used by Authors to describe the performance of the Sf-36 in Turkey without adding anything new, either in terms of methods or results.

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

1) As the major objective of the study was to obtain population normative data, more details of the sampling framework and of the methods adopted to obtain the sample should be given. In addition, it is not clearly stated in the Method section how the questionnaire was actually administered. In Discussion a short mention about the fact that it was delivered in the context of a face-to-face interview suggests that some of the results may be produced by this method to deliver the questionnaire: it is well-known that the mode of administration may have an influence on how people report on or rate health phenomena. Finally, some data to support the representativeness of the sample should be given as its socio-demographic characteristics (average young age, 25% with an university degree, 62% reporting on to be non-employee) suggest a sort of selection that might jeopardize the external validity of findings to the Turkish population. It is my impression that this sample can, at the best, be considered representative of an urban population.

2) Some of the above remarks also apply to the analyses carried out to describe the reliability and discriminative properties of the Sf-36.

3) Finally, the study limitations should be identified and discussed by Authors in order to allow readers to better understand the internal and external validity of 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)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

The conclusion are too synthetic and vague and should be more focussed on the study main objectives and on the actual value of results, according to the use of the Sf-36 in Turke

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests