Reviewer's report

Title: Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence vs Heavy Smoking Index in a general population survey.

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Reviewer: David S. Timberlake

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Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence vs. Heavy Smoking Index in a General Population Survey, Perez-Rios et al.

Summary

The authors of this study assessed the validity of the abbreviated version of the FTND, the Heaviness of Smoking Index (HSI). The article was concise and well-written. The results of this study are consistent with other replications with exception of the gender discrepancy for sensitivity.

Major Compulsory Revision

Introduction

1) The authors need to make a stronger argument in the introduction for another replication study of the validity of HSI. In addressing the objective of their study, the authors should first establish the original rationale for utilizing the abbreviated version of the FTND (reference #2; Heatherton (1989)). One argument for their analysis, as they noted subsequent to the introduction, is that most studies have not examined the measures of validity by gender. This is the one consideration which distinguishes their results from other studies.

Results

2) A more thorough examination of the FTND items by gender would be useful in explaining the discrepancy in sensitivity between the male and female smokers. One suggestion is to modify Table 1 to make it more informative. The authors might consider adding additional columns corresponding to the percentage of males and females who responded to the various FTND/HSI categories.

Discretionary Revision

Methods

3) Briefly describe or list the measures of tobacco use that were ascertained in the survey.
Discussion

4) The authors should consider briefly discussing the limitation of using the FTND as the gold standard. A number of recent publications have compared the FTND with other measures of nicotine dependence. This discussion will provide the reader with the broader context of the ND measures, and where the FTND fits in this context.

5) I am undecided if Table 3 should be placed in the discussion. On the one hand, it does provide a convenient summary for the reader to compare results. One alternative is to move the table to the introduction, once again emphasizing that the current study is only one of two which examined the measures of validity by gender.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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