Reviewer's report

Title: Validation of a Spanish language version of the Pain Self-Perception Scale in patients with fibromyalgia

Version: 2 Date: 20 July 2010

Reviewer: Lance McCracken

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Mental defeat is a psychological variable that was developed in the context of post traumatic stress disorder and has been recently applied to chronic pain. As such it is added to a long list of psychological variables studied in relation to chronic pain. Whether this variable is progressive or brings something fundamentally or deeply new to the field is an open question. Mental defeat in this study is assessed with the Pain Self Perception Scale. This scale has some interesting content. On the other hand much of the content has a familiar quality. It reflects thoughts and beliefs of loss, helplessness, failure, and self-criticism. It does not appear to be a new concept that such thoughts and beliefs are likely to align with experiences of emotional distress, and withdrawal or avoidance. So, it is important to look carefully at new ideas and new applications of ideas. It is important to understand the theoretical roots of new developments and to ask where these might lead.

Setting aside the comments above, the authors of this particular manuscript present a study that appears to be well-conducted, mostly well presented, and likely to be of interest to researchers and clinicians in the field. I have just a few specific points that may require clarification or further thought. Most of these points are minor.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Are there sensitivity and specificity data for the Standardized Polyvalent Psychiatric Interview? How will the reader know that this interview yields valid classification of psychiatric disorder?

2. What method of rotation method was used in the process of coming to an interpretation for the results of factor analysis. Was it an orthogonal or oblique method? In some ways the results presented almost look like an unrotated solution. It seems that there is not a single variable that has its highest loading on factor 2. That seems unusual. The basis for rejecting the two factor solution does not seem clear. If the factors were rotated in such a way as to allow them to correlate, were they correlated? Was an interpretable second factor extracted at any point? Did indeed only one variable have a salient loading on factor 2?

- Minor Essential Revisions
3. The authors say that 16 patients were excluded because CFS symptoms predominated. They later say “none of the participants were ruled out because of exclusion criteria. This seems inconsistent.

4. In what is either the last or second to last paragraph “This data...” should be “These data...”. The word data is plural.

5. Reference 14 included errors, “Copying” should say “Coping.”

- Discretionary Revisions

6. In the description of the HADS the authors use the term “organic disorders.” I think this term is not ideal. Maybe a different term like “physical health problems,” “medical conditions,” or something like “people being assessed in hospital or other healthcare settings.”

7. The authors may want to rewrite the section of the PVAS. The phrase “a thorough and understandable” seems extraneous. “Encourage points at each end are characterized by verbal expressions such as...” could easily be rewritten to say simply “The anchor points are labelled...”

8. The “face validity” data presented seem to come from a separate sample not fully described in the study. Is this then the result of a separate study? It is not clear whether this addition is helpful or whether this ought to be presented as a result of the study.

9. Anyone looking closely at the PSPS will see catastrophic thought content and as much of more depressive thought content. What happens if both catastrophizing and depression are controlled, does the PSPS continue to significantly predict anxiety and fibromyalgia impact on functioning?

10. I am not sure that table 1 is needed. It might be best to include a note saying that this information is available from the authors.

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

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.