Reviewer’s report

Title: Cross-cultural validation of the Educational Needs Assessment Tool in RA in 7 European countries

Version: 1 Date: 22 January 2011

Reviewer: Ayse Kucukdeveci

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Major Compulsary Revisions:

Introduction:
- Is ENAT a questionnaire specific to arthritis or rheumatoid arthritis? This should be stated clearly in 3rd paragraph.

Methods:
- Patients: What do the authors mean with the exclusion criteria “having other forms of rheumatic disease in addition to RA”? What does this “rheumatic disease” include? In ENAT there are questions about pain, movement, drug treatments etc., which will be influenced by other concomitant diseases. The questions in ENAT do not ask all the questions specifically for arthritis. So the authors should specify this patient exclusion criteria. For example did they include DM patients? What about drugs taken for Hypertension?
- Measure: Although the adaptation of different versions of ENAT seems to be a part of this study, no information is given about the details of this procedure in each country or different adapted versions. Were the translations semantic and/or conceptual? Were there any cultural differences for any items? If yes, what sort of solution was found for which items, for which country? How do the readers get access to different versions of the ENAT, including the original English version? These should be mentioned in this section.
- Titles of 3 sections of methods coming after “measure” section are all explaining statistical analysis. Under the title statistical analysis, the authors explain Rasch analysis and go on explaining it in “strategies” as well. Also they mention DIF both in cross-cultural invariance section and also in “strategies” section. This confuses the reader. I think there should be one section of statistical analysis, under this section Rasch analysis should be explained then the the steps of the analyses performed in this study should be given.

Results:
- It seems that only the pooled data results have been explained although country-specific results have been presented in table 2. It would be good to mention country-specific results as well in this section. So were the assumptions of Rasch analysis met for each country? For example the Portuguese version seems not to be unidimensional in Table 2. Do the authors have any comment
for this?

Discussion:
- The authors have written in results that the cross-cultural DIF is due to the Dutch data. However while they discuss cross-cultural DIF in the third paragraph, they have made general comments. How would the practical use of this instrument be in future? Would this “splitting items” be applied only when the Dutch version is used? Would adjustment be necessary for comparison among any other 6 countries also? These should be clarified in that paragraph.

Conclusion:
- The statement “It satisfies the strictest standards of measurement” is somewhat exaggerated for the results of this study. For example one version did not confirm unidimensionality.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Tables:
- Title of Table 2: It should “Rasch analysis results”.

Discretionary Revisions:

Discussion:
- Regarding the comments about the sample, the most striking characteristics of Dutch data compared with the other countries is the great proportion (%82) of the highly educated patients. This has not been mentioned. It would be better to give the percentages in education row in Table 1, such the gender presentation.

**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