Title: Reliability and validity of the Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire for use in acute low back pain patients.

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Version: 6 Date: 11 July 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over

Subject: (Re) Submission of a manuscript.

Dear editor(s) of BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders,

With this writing, I would like to propose to you the resubmission of the manuscript “Reliability and validity of the Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire for use in acute low back pain patients”, for publication in BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders. All contributing authors have given their consent for submission of the manuscript. Furthermore, with this resubmission I would like to undertake that the above mentioned manuscript has not been published elsewhere, accepted for publication elsewhere or under editorial review for publication elsewhere; and that my Institute’s (Research Group in Health Care and Nursing – Hanze University, Applied Sciences, Groningen, the Netherlands) representative is fully aware of this submission.

The study design is a non-experimental, cross-sectional study. All participants received usual standard physical therapy in two multidisciplinary health care centers in primary care, which was carried out according to the Dutch guideline for acute nonspecific low back pain patients without controlling participants or conditions; participants fill in the Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire on two measurement moments. Therefore ethical approval was not obtained. Although participants received standard usual care our institution was convinced that ethical approval was not required. It might be possible to obtain a retrospective approval?

The main goal of the article is to describe the psychometric qualities of the Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire (Brief IPQ) in primary care physical therapy, specifically in
acute nonspecific low back pain patients. However measurement of patients’ perception of musculoskeletal disorders is increasing in daily practice, measurement instruments for those purposes have not been researched until now. It is therefore that this study is a novelty in this field of interest and relevant for daily clinical practice in primary care and for evidence based research. Studies of patients’ perceptions in musculoskeletal disorders are rare; therefore this study is of great importance for evidence search and contributes to the field of nonspecific low back pain. Knowledge of recognizing this cognition is essential.

Our study showed adequate reliability and validity, however the Brief IPQ is not suitable for measuring changes in low back pain over time.

BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders is an open access Journal and covers all aspects of musculoskeletal disorders, that is the reason for submission this study to your Journal.

The Research Project was not sponsored. I hope you will consider the manuscript for reviewing. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Hank Hallegraeff.

The following changes have been made.

Abstract:

- In line 6 we inserted: “common musculoskeletal disorders like”

    to emphasize that new evidence is presented in musculoskeletal disorders.
In line 7 the phrase “Patients’ perceptions vary across different populations and affect coping styles”, is added, relating the main reason to execute this study.

Line 12: “in multidisciplinary health care center in Dutch primary care” is added.

In line 21 “these correlation” is inserted.

Addition to line 24, 25 “compared with the mental health subscale of the Short Form 36 Health Survey. However, limits of agreement are large.”

**Manuscript:**

- In line 77 - 86 the phrase is renewed into: “Before patients were included in the study, we obtained oral and written informed consent and explained to them the study protocol. Patient characteristics (gender, age, height, weight) and IPQ-B and SF-36 responses were obtained in a separate room prior to each patient’s scheduled standard care service. All participants were screened by general practitioners and referred to physical therapists where they received standard physical therapy care in two multidisciplinary health care centers in the northern part of the Netherlands. This intervention was carried out according to the Dutch guideline for ANLBP patients without controlling participants or conditions as every patient with ANLBP and as a result ethical approval was not required. Patients fill in the Brief-IPQ on two measurement moments.”
- Line 90, 91, and 92 the section Design is added: “Design. A non-experimental cross-sectional study design was performed, with two measurement moments.”

- In line 218 “perceptions” is changed into “perception”.

“Authors’ contributions and competing interests” have changed and expanded.

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