Reviewer's report

Title: The Italian version of the Physical Therapy Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire (PTPSQ-I(15)). Psychometric properties in a sample of inpatients

Version: 1 Date: 16 December 2013

Reviewer: Susan Roush

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review your manuscript, and thank you for continuing this important line of research. I offer the following comments in the hope that they will increase your manuscript's clarity so others will know of your work and its place in the growing body of patient satisfaction literature in physiotherapy.

Major Revisions:

1. More information needs to be provided on how the surveys were administrated. When, and by whom, were subjects approached? At what point during their admission were subjects surveyed, e.g. upon admission or in their first few days as an inpatient, in the middle of their inpatient stay, or at discharge? If the subject data were consistently collected at a particular point in subjects’ inpatient stay, it should be noted. If this was not consistent, it needs to be described as a limitation.

2. Why were items that didn't relate to inpatients included in the survey: e.g. #13 (‘It was easy to schedule visits after my first appointment’) or Q10 (‘The clinic scheduled appointments at convenient times.’)? It is difficult to determine what effect these items had on the statistical analysis, but since there were only 15 items total, the inclusion of 2 or 3 accounted for a non-negligible percentage of the survey. More explanation of the basis for the inclusion of these items is needed.

3. Concerning the non-parametric tests of significance: no alpha level was defined, but I assume alpha = .05. Given that, too many tests were conducted without apparent modification of the alpha level to accommodate the accumulating Type I error rate. Also, as noted on Page 10, multiple comparisons were conducted “between all the pairs of means,” again raising questions about accumulating Type I error.

4. Since subjects saw a “variety of health care professionals, various technical and assistive personnel” (pg. 13), how do the authors know the subjects responded to the questionnaire specifically as it related to their physical therapy experience? More detail in this regard would be very helpful. As the authors note, inpatient satisfaction with physical therapy has never/rarely been reported. One of the reasons for this (at least in the US) is that the acuity level of inpatients typically is so high it is difficult to have confidence in gathered data. Of particular
concern is whether patients are able to accurately identify who among the professionals they see are physical therapists, and what treatment they receive is physical therapy. [The additional detail requested in Item 1, above, may address this concern, or more detail on the typical inpatient experience in Italian hospitals may also clarify this issue.]

5. Diagnosis information on the subjects is missing. This deficiency becomes important given the last sentence in the Discussion: “…sustained across different health conditions (e.g., neurologic, musculoskeletal, etc.).” If the current subjects didn’t have neurological or musculoskeletal diagnoses, what diagnoses were represented among the subjects? If this information is not available, this is a limitation.

Minor:
1. Considering the analysis related to Divergent Validity: In addition to reporting the significance of the correlation coefficients, please add the coefficient of determination, indicating the amount of shared variance.

2. I do not understand this statement from Page 10: “Instead of being based upon the means of the response, this test is based upon the means of the ranked values, the rank being the position of a value in the ordered sequence of values.” Please clarify.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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:

In 1999, I published a manuscript on the development of another patient satisfaction survey in physical therapy: Roush & Sonstoem, Phys Ther. 1999;79(2) 159-170.