Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessing the Safety Attitudes Questionnaire (SAQ), German language Version in Swiss University Hospitals - A Validation study

Version: 1 Date: 15 May 2012

Reviewer: Jason Etchegaray

Reviewer’s report:

The authors addressed an important issue in survey measurement and safety culture – adapting and validating a German version of the Safety Attitudes Questionnaire. The work they undertook is difficult and challenging. They used the AERA guidelines, which is commendable, and reported many results. I have some concerns that need to be clarified:

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

1) On page 5, a retest of the survey is mentioned. This retest is not mentioned in the abstract nor is the rationale for the retest explained to the reader on page 8. The purpose of the retest needs more discussion. Also, why 6 months between test and retest? Is this an appropriate timeframe?

2) For the four items mentioned with low I-CVI levels, what does “no further tests were not carried out” mean? Does this mean that they were excluded from subsequent analysis? If not, why were they included?

3) In the Internal Structure section, while I understand why you collapsed into three response categories, I am unsure why you did not try to collapse into disagree/neutral/agree. It would be helpful for the reader to see the % breakdown of these five categories so he/she can verify for him/herself that your collapsing is warranted.

4) The collapsed response categories in the Internal Structure section are problematic for the analysis you are conducting. It is one issue to argue that your original five response choice scale could be conceptualized as interval yet an entirely different issue that your collapsed three choice scale could be conceptualized in the same way. Your collapsed scale is clearly ordinal and as a result requires estimation different than ML when conducting the CFA. The authors are encouraged to read Flora and Curran’s 2004 Psychological Methods paper that helps address CFA with ordinal data. Given that I think you need to re-run the analysis using a different approach (as Flora and Curran describe), I cannot evaluate your results because they might change based on this new analysis.

5) I understand why you include the SOS but isn’t a possible take home message for the reader that the much more efficient SOS, which has acceptable reliability and validity information, correlates well with the SAQ and therefore could be used instead of the SAQ?
MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

1) In Table One, what does the following mean? --> There is a moderate to strong correlation between mean values of SAQ and the once of the Safety Organizing Scale distributed a the same time.

2) Were there differences between nurses and physicians in SAQ scores?

3) If culture is a unit-level phenomenon, why do you report only individual-level results?

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.