Reviewer's report

Title: Acceptance of the 'Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice (Chinese)' as a standardized evaluation of professional competency in Chinese physiotherapy students: an observational study

Version: 0 Date: 30 Jan 2020

Reviewer: Benjie Tang

Reviewer's report:

The authors reported an observational study on the process of translation and adoption of the "Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice (APP)". The study was conducted with small number of subjects and the manuscript was well written.

There are number issues with this study:

1. The APP is a validated assessment tool used to assess student performance in its original format in Australia (Dalton M, Davidson M, Keating J. The assessment of physiotherapy practice (APP) is a valid measure of professional competence of physiotherapy students: a cross-sectional study with rasch analysis. J Physiother. 2011;57: 239-246.doi:10.1016/s1836-9553(11)70054-6). This has been translated into Chinese with assurance of accuracy by the experts in the field and subsequently and politely used to assess student performance in Shanghai, China, reported in this manuscript. The authors may be aware that there is some difference in medical education and healthcare system between China and Australia such as stated on page 9 line 45-50. The direct adoption of the APP will require some modification to enable it to be used accurately in the Chinese system. If the assessment was modified and applied in the Chinese system an appropriate validity study would be required.

2. To conduct such a validity study on this assessment tool, the new Messick framework that consist of 5 different sources of validity evidence: content, response process, internal structure (eg, reliability), relations with other variables, and consequence of the assessment/test should be used to validate this APP-Chinese. If this wasn't the intention of design of the study, the authors should explain the reasons behind. This should be fully discussed in a limitation section in the manuscript.
3. The number of students who participated in this study was rather small (only 14) for this kind questionnaire-based Likert study. Only 66% of the students agreed the expected competency criteria for an entry-level physiotherapist was clear to them. This may reflect the reliability of the assessment that was used to assess the Chinese students as the APP was originally designed and validated for the Australian system.

4. In the conclusion, the authors stated that they would highly recommend that the APP-Chinese assessment tool be adopted by all clinical physiotherapy programs in China (Page 13 line 45-47). I would be careful to announce such a statement. As mentioned, this observational study is not a properly designed validation study and results were produced from a very small number of student. This conclusion is neither technical sound nor scientifically right.

5. Again, in the conclusion (page 14 line 1-4), there is no data from this study to support this conclusion. I would delete it.

6. There should be a limitation section to describe the limitations of this study.

7. The tables are submitted twice, which is a minor issue.

8. It would be helpful if the originally APP or modified APP-Chinese could be included in the manuscript though I understand that this has been published in the previous study (Dalton M, Davidson M, Keating J. The assessment of physiotherapy practice (APP) is a valid measure of professional competence of physiotherapy students: a cross-sectional study with rasch analysis. J Physiother. 2011;57: 239-246. doi:10.1016/s1836-9553(11)70054-6)).

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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