Psychometric Properties of the Malay Version of the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale: A Study of Husbands of Breast Cancer Patients in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Nasir Yusoff1*, Wah Yun Low2, Cheng-Har Yip3

Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to examine the psychometric properties of the Malay Version of the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), tested on 67 husbands of the women who were diagnosed with breast cancer. The eligible husbands were retrieved from the Clinical Oncology Clinic at three hospitals in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Data was collected at three weeks and ten weeks following surgery for breast cancer of their wives. The psychometric properties of the HADS were reported based on Cronbach’s alpha, Intraclass Correlation Coefficients (ICC), Effect Size Index (ESI), sensitivity and discriminity of the scale. Internal consistency of the scale is excellent, with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.88 for Anxiety subscale and 0.79 for Depression subscale. Test-retest Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) is 0.35 and 0.42 for Anxiety and Depression Subscale, respectively. Small mean differences were observed at test-retest measurement with ESI of 0.21 for Anxiety and 0.19 for Depression. Non-significant result was revealed for the discriminant validity (mastectomy vs lumpectomy). The Malay Version of the HADS is appropriate to measure the anxiety and depression among the husbands of the women with breast cancer in Malaysia.

Keywords: Depression and anxiety - Malay husbands of breast cancer patients - HADS - validation

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Introduction

The Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) has been used widely in cancer research to measure the psychological morbidity of the cancer patients and their families (e.g. Pandey et al, 2006). In lieu to this, most studies in breast cancer showed that the partner or spouse of the patient experienced psychological morbidity throughout their spouse’s cancer crisis (e.g. Fitch and Allard, 2007; Omne-ponten et al., 1993; Wagner et al., 2006). The Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) was developed by Zigmond and Snaith (1983) as a self-administered questionnaire which is able to detect the severity of emotional disorder. This scale can distinguish between anxiety and depression, and it can also be easily used in the hospital, out-patient and community settings. The reliability of HADS had been established by many researchers. Among others, Moorey et al. (1991) reported the Cronbach’s alpha of 0.93 for the Anxiety sub-scale, and 0.9 for the Depression sub-scale. Other researchers also found the reliability of the HADS satisfactory (Clark and Fallowfield, 1986). The construct validity of the scale, as a measurement of the two factors, was confirmed in a factor analysis among cancer patients (Moorey et al., 1991). The concurrent validity data for the HADS had been reported in psychiatric patients (Bramley et al., 1988), in heterogeneous group of patients with physical illness (Aylard et al., 1987) and in patients attending a genito-urinary clinic (Barczak, 1988).

There is no study that examining the psychometric properties of HADS-Malay Version among husbands of the women diagnosed with breast cancer in Malaysia. Thus, this study was implemented to determine the psychometric properties of the HADS-Malay Version as a reliable and valid tool to measure the anxiety and depression of the husbands of Malaysian women with breast cancer.

Materials and Methods

Scale

The copyrighted scale of the Malay Version of HADS was purchased directly from the Nfer-NELSON company (thus, the back-translation procedure was not implemented in this study) and was administered under the Nfer-NELSON’s regulation and policy. This scale contains 14 items and consists of two sub-scales; one measuring anxiety (A scale) and the other measuring depression (D scale) which are scored separately. Each item is rated on a four-point scale, giving a maximum score of 21 for anxiety and 21 for depression. The option for every item varies. Besides treating the scores as ordinal data, the