Validation of the Malay version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS-M) among a group of medical students in Faculty of Medicine, University Malaya

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**ABSTRACT**

Objective: The aim of this study was to validate the Malay version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS-M) among a group of medical students in Faculty of Medicine, University Malaya.

Methods: 237 students participated in the study. They were given the Malay version of MSPSS, medical outcome study (MOS) social support survey, Malay version of General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), Malay version of Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and English version of MSPSS. A week later, these students were again given the Malay version of MSPSS.

Results: The instrument displayed good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.89), parallel form reliability (0.94) and test-retest reliability (0.77) (Spearman's rho, p < 0.01). The negative correlation of the total and subscales of the instrument with the Malay version of GHQ and BDI confirmed its validity.

Extraction method of the 12 items MSPSS using principle axis factoring with direct oblimin rotation converged into three factors of perceived social support (Family, Friends and Significant Others) with reliability coefficients of 0.88, 0.82 and 0.94, respectively.

Conclusion: The Malay version of the MSPSS demonstrated good psychometric properties in measuring social support among a group of medical students from Faculty of Medicine, University Malaya and it could be used as a simple instrument on young educated Malaysian adolescents.

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1. Introduction

The role of social support is well recognized as a coping resource in relation between stress and psychological or physical symptoms. Social support is a multidimensional construct, which include the size of social network, emotional support, instrumental support, quality of social support and reciprocal helping of other (Sarason et al., 1983). The MSPSS is one of the many scales designed to assess social support. The MSPSS is a self-administered measure of social support. It addresses the subjective assessment of social support adequacy. It was designed to assess the perception of social support adequacy from three different sources: Family, Friends and Significant Others. The MSPSS contains 12 items, therefore it is simple to use and can be quickly administered and scored (Zimet et al., 1988). The reliability, validity and factor structure of the MSPSS have been demonstrated across a number of different samples including university students (Dahlem et al., 1991), pregnant women (Zimet et al., 1990), adolescents living abroad (Zimet et al., 1988), pediatric residents (Zimet et al., 1988), urban adolescents (Janie and Zimet, 2000), adolescents on an inpatient psychiatric unit (Kazarian and McCabe, 1991) and psychiatric outpatients (Cecil et al., 1995).

It was translated into many languages. The reliability, concurrent validity and construct validity of the Chinese version of MSPSS (MSPSS-C) were established on a group of Hong Kong Chinese adolescents (Kee, 2000).

This study aims to translate the MSPSS into Malay language (denoted MSPSS-M) and examine the psychometric properties of the translated version among the Malaysian population. Specificity, reliability (internal consistency), factorial structure, concurrent validity and construct validity of the MSPSS-M were examined in the study.

2. Methods

Approval from the Medical Ethical Committee (MEC), University Malaya Medical Centre was obtained to conduct the study. Permission from the original author of the instrument was obtained.

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