



Fear During COVID-19 pandemic: Fear of COVID-19 Scale Measurement Properties

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Dear Editor,

The emergence and development of the COVID-19 pandemic is having a toll on the mental health of the general population, and healthcare workers around the world, often manifested in depression, fear, stress, trauma, and anxiety (Ahorsu et al. 2020; Mamun and Ullah 2020; Lee et al. 2020). Various scales have been developed during the pandemic to measure these effects (Ransing et al. 2020). Fear during the COVID-19 pandemic has been associated with serious mental health consequences, such as passive suicidal ideation, alcohol and substance use, and extreme hopelessness (Mamun and Ullah 2020). Hence, a timely and accurate assessment of COVID-19-related fear is relevant for clinicians.

The Fear of COVID-19 Scale (FCV-19S) is a 7-item scale that assesses the severity of COVID-19-related fear (Ahorsu et al. 2020). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating a greater fear of COVID-19 (Ahorsu et al. 2020). The tool was developed in Persian language, and its initial validation was conducted in a sample of Iranian adults drawn from the general population. Following the initial validation, several studies have examined the psychometric properties of the scale across different populations and in different languages (Ransing et al. 2020). In this letter, we provide an overview of the available literature on the utility and psychometric properties of the FCV-19S.

We searched PubMed using the keywords “COVID-19” or “SARS-CoV-2” or “Coronavirus disease” and “Fear Scale” or “FCV-19S” or “Fear of COVID-19 Scale” till 30 August 2020. We found 19 studies assessing the reliability and/or validity of the FCV-19S. The full texts for each article were retrieved and data extracted regarding sample size, mean age, language, country, and scale reliability and validity. A summary of the included studies is presented in Table 1.

The FCV-19S has been translated into 14 languages and validated across 20 different countries (Pakpour et al. 2020). Three studies, including the initial validation study, were conducted in the Middle East, six in Asia, six in Europe, and one each in the USA, New Zealand, Cuba, and Peru. Most of the studies ($n = 18$) validated the FCV-19S with adult populations, with one study being conducted among adolescents. The Cronbach’s alpha values across the different studies ranged from 0.81 to 0.93 indicating high reliability of the FCV-19S.

Twelve studies investigated the criterion validity (either discriminant or convergent) of the FCV-19S. Similarly to the original validation (Ahorsu et al. 2020), Soraci et al. and Alyami et al. examined the validity of the FCV-19S against the HADS among Italian and Saudi Arabian adults,

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