VALIDATION AND ADAPTATION OF THE BAHASA MELAYU VERSION OF THE EXPLANATORY MODEL INTERVIEW CATALOGUE STIGMA SCALE AMONG COVID-19 SURVIVORS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) imparted unprecedented negative impact worldwide since it was declared as a global pandemic in 2020 due to its high infectivity and mortality rate. Consequently, those who have been infected with COVID-19 experienced significant amount of social stigma which resulting in deterioration of mental well-being. Hence, this study aimed to translate the Explanatory Model Interview Catalogue Stigma Scale (EMIC-SS) into Malay and investigate the reliability and validity of the Malay version (EMIC-SS-M) among COVID-19 survivors in Malaysia. Initially, concurrent translation and back translation of the EMIC-SS was conducted followed by the assessment of its face and content validity. Then, the EMIC-SS-M was administered to 219 COVID-19 survivors recruited from three targeted centers for assessment of its reliability (internal consistency [IC]) and validity (convergent and discriminant validity, exploratory factor analysis [EFA] and confirmatory factor analysis [CFA]). The EMIC-SS-M reported an acceptable internal consistency with Cronbach's α of 0.727, while its domains reported acceptable Cronbach's α ranged from 0.708 to 0.795. EFA and CFA confirmed that the EMIC-SS-M consisted of 15 items in 4 domains. The EMIC-SS-M exhibited good psychometric properties and ready for use to assess stigma among COVID-19 survivors in Malaysia. It can be adapted for use to assess stigma in other disease conditions among the Malaysian population in future studies.

Keywords: COVID-19 survivors, social stigma, reliability, validity, Malaysia

Introduction

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) which is characterized by high infectivity began to spread in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019 and rapidly emerged as a global infection pandemic in less than 6 months. Despite the infection is better controlled since 2021, to date, the number of people being infected with COVID-19 rise to 571 million people worldwide and mortality is at 6.3 million people (1). Consequently, due to its high rate of infectivity and mortality, social stigma towards people who are infected with COVID-19 is not uncommon.

Stigma is a process in which there is negative discrimination against people with certain physical, behavioral or social attributes. Social stigma is related to negative association of a person, a group of people or places sharing certain characteristics or disease state. Social stigma attributed to infectious diseases may lead to rejection by family members, spouse or partner, the surrounding community and dismissal from work which in turn contribute to various negative mental health impact, such as depression and anxiety (2, 3).

Social stigma was as high as 5% among those being diagnosed with COVID-19 reported that they were being stigmatized by the community that they live in. Those who were aged 40 and above, those who live in area in