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# Sexual Compulsivity Scale: Adaptation and Validation in Spanish Population

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Sexual compulsivity has been studied in relation to high-risk behav-10 ior for sexually transmitted infections. The aim of this study was 11 the adaptation and validation of the Sexual Compulsivity Scale 12 13 to a sample of Spanish young people. This scale was applied to 1,196 (891 female, 305 male) Spanish college students. The results 14of principal components factor analysis using a varimax rotation 15 indicated a two-factor solution; similar results were obtained in 16 another study. The reliability of the Sexual Compulsivity Scale was 17 found to be high. Moreover, the scale showed good temporal sta-18 bility. External correlates were examined through Pearson correla-19 tions between the Sexual Compulsivity Scale and other constructs 20 related with HIV prevention. The authors' results suggest that the 21 Sexual Compulsivity Scale is an appropriate measure for assessing 22 sexual compulsivity, showing adequate psychometric properties in 23 24the Spanish population.

According to Kalichman and Cain (2004), *sexual compulsivity* is a propensity to experience sexual disinhibition and under controlled sexual impulses and behaviors as self-identified by individuals. It can be considered a heterogeneous psychological construct that includes a concern for and increase—in intensity and frequency—in sexual fantasies, behavior patterns, and desires that can lead to problems in daily life as (Kalichman & Cain, 2004; Q2

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Bancroft, 2008). low self-esteem, anxiety, loneliness, impaired social skills, 31 occupational difficulties, guilt, and shame (Black, Kehrberg, Flumerfelt, & 32 Schlosser, 1997; Kalichman & Rompa, 1995). Furthermore, researchers have 33 defined various symptoms related to sexual compulsivity, such as excessive 34 pornography use, sex with multiple anonymous partners, an excessive use 35 of Internet for sexual purposes, and increased anxiety when not engaged 36 in sexual behavior (Parsons et al., 2008; Parsons, Severino, Grov, Bimbi, & 37 38 Morgenstern, 2007).

Sexual compulsivity has also health implications because of increased 39 risk of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections (Dodge, Reece, 40 Cole, & Sandfort, 2004; Kalichman & Rompa, 1995; McCoul & Haslam, 2001). 41 Benotsch, Kalichman, and Kelly (1999), in a study carried out with HIV-42 positive self-identified gay and bisexual men, found that people who scored 43 higher in sexual compulsivity reported more frequent receptive and totally 44 unprotected anal and oral sex acts with more partners. There researchers 45 have found similar results (e.g., Grov, Parson, & Bimbi, 2010; Kalichman & 46 47 Rompa, 2001; Kelly, Bimbi, Nanin, Izienicki, & Parsons, 2009).

As a result of this growing interest in the relation between sexual com-48 pulsivity and high-risk behavior for HIV infection, some authors have pro-49 posed different questionnaires to evaluate sexual compulsivity (Table 1). 50 Kalichman et al.'s (1994) study was the first attempt to assess sexual compul-51 sivity specifically. They proposed the Sexual Compulsivity Scale (SCS) as a 52 tool for studying underlying compulsive personality traits that may be associ-53 ated with resistance to changing sexual behavior patterns despite exposure to 54 messages and initiatives aimed at preventing HIV. We subsequently describe 55 in detail the characteristics of this instrument. 56

After reviewing the literature, we decided to translate and validate the SCS because it is a short questionnaire with good psychometric properties and has been used in different studies to analyze associations between personality traits and behavior change for HIV. In this sense, the scale has been shown to be useful in the prediction of unprotected sex (Grov et al., 2010). It has also been used in different types of populations, including college students (Gullete & Lyons, 2005).

This instrument consists of 10 statements largely based on a 12-step 64 self-help manual (CompCare, 1987) for people seeking recovery from sexual 65 addiction. The pilot study of the scale (Kalichman et al., 1994) was con-66 67 ducted with a sample of sexually active men who considered themselves homosexuals (n = 160). The results showed high levels of reliability ( $\alpha =$ 68 69 .89). Later, Kalichman and Rompa (1995) used the scale in two different samples: (a) one of gay men (n = 296) and (b) one of African American men 70 71 (n = 60) and African American women (n = 98) from inner-city areas and low-income groups. The scale showed high levels of internal consistency 72 ( $\alpha = .86$  for gay men and  $\alpha = .87$  for African American men and women). In 73

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Ouestionnaire	Items and factors	Sample	Psychometrics properties: Internal consistency
ı		-	`
The Perceived Sexual Control Scale (Exner, Meyer-Bahlburg & Ehrhardt, 1992)	20 items grouped into two factors: Control of sex drive and Control of risk	Community members and college students (mostly gay men)	0.67 to 0.87
Compulsive Sexual Behavior Inventory (Coleman, Miner, Ohlerking and	42 items grouped into three factors: control, abuse, and violence	Psychotherapy clients, community members and college students (male,	0.67 to 0.87
Vala Brown Obsessing Commilsing	10 items	remarc, gay and neterosexual	0.00.40.001
rate-prown Obsessive Computative Scale-Compulsive Sexual Behavior	10 herris	Gay and Disexual male community members.	16.0 01 00.0
(Morgenstern, Parsons, Muench, Hollander, Bimbi & Irwin, 2004)			
Sexual Symptom Assessment Scale (Raymond, Lloyd, Miner & Kim, 2007).	12 items	Male psychotherapy clients	0.92
Compulsive Sexual Behavior Consequences Scale (Muench et al., 2007)	21 items	Gay and bisexual male community members	0.86 to 0.89
Cognitive and Behavioral Outcomes of Sexual Behavior Scale (McBride, Reece & Sanders, 2007).	36 items grouped into two scales: cognitive outcomes scale and behavioral outcomes scale	College students	0.86 to 0.89

**TABLE 1.** Review of Sexual Compulsivity Scales

<sup>74</sup> both samples, there are significant correlations between sexual compulsivity,

75 high-risk sexual behavior, and drug use before sex.

Although this scale has been used to evaluate sexual compulsivity, es-76 pecially among individuals belonging to groups deemed at high risk or HIV-77 positive individuals, the few studies conducted in college students suggest 78 that higher scores in sexual compulsivity are associated with a higher num-79 ber of unprotected sexual encounters (Dodge et al., 2004; Gullete & Lions, 80 81 2005). To design optimal prevention campaigns, it is necessary to identify the characteristics of those most likely to engage in high-risk behavior (McBride, 82 83 Reece, & Sanders, 2008).

The aim of our study was therefore to translate, adapt, and validate the SCS of Kalichman et al. (1994) in a Spanish population that has been little studied—young people—represented here by a sample of college students. Although college students have not been identified as a risk population theoretically—reral studies in Spain and in other countries have emphasized the high pre-rance of risky sexual behavior in this population (Ballester, Gil Giménez & Ruiz 2009; McBride et al. 2008; Rolison 2002)

**Q6** 90 Gil, Giménez, & Ruiz, 2009; McBride et al., 2008; Rolison, 2002).

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# METHOD

92 Participants

93 The questionnaire was responded by 1,196 Spanish college students of the

Jaume I University and the University of Valencia, ranging between 18 and 26

- 95 years of age. Most participants were women (74.5%) who were 18-20 years
- 96 old (60.9%; *M* = 20.22, *SD* = 2.11), heterosexual (95.5%) and nonpracticing
- 97 Catholics (44.7%) or atheists (43.9%).

98 Measures and Instruments

Participants responded individually to the SCS. To assess convergent and divergent validity, the participants also answered the Sexual Sensation Seeking
Scale (Kalichman et al., 1994), the Spanish version of the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979 [translated by Sanz &
Vázquez, 1998]) and The Brief Version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation
Scale (Leary, 1983). Last, they responded to the Cuestionario de Prevención
del Sida ("AIDS I pention Questionnaire"; Ballester, Gil, Guirado, & Bravo,
2004), which was responded in Spanish

**Q7** 106 2004), which was developed in Spanish.

107 We subsequently explain these questionnaires:

• SCS (Kalichman et al., 1994): This scale consists of 10 Likert-type items that

- assess sexual compulsivity, measured on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all
- *like me*) to 4 (*very much like me*), with a total score between 10 and 40.
- 111 The internal consistency of the instrument applied to a sample of college

students was .76 for men and .81 for women (Reece, Plate, & Daughtry,2001).

• Sexual Sensation Seeking Scale (Kalichman et al., 1994): This scale is de-114 signed to measure "the propensity to attain optimal levels of sexual excite-115 ment and to engage in novel sexual experiences." It consists of 9 Likert-type 116 items measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 117 4 (very much like me), with a total score range between 9 and 36. The 118 119 instrument has shown an internal consistency of .81 in various samples, such as gay men (Kalichman & Rompa, 1995) and college students (Gray 120 121 & Wilson, 2007).

Beck Depression Inventory in its Spanish Version (Sanz & Vázquez, 1998):
This scale is a 21-question multiple-choice self-report inventory that reflects
cognitive, affective, behavioral, and somatic symptoms of depression in
relation to the 7 previous days. The items are answered according to
a 4-point scale denoting different levels of severity and intensity. The
Spanish version has shown good internal consistency in a sample of college
students (.83).

• Cuestionario de Prevención del Sida (CPS; "AIDS Prevention Questionnaire"): This questionnaire, by Ballester et al. (2004), consists of 65 items referring to HIV infection, transmission routes, preventive methods and behaviors, antibodies test, and attitude toward HIV-positive people. Internal consistency of the scale in a sample of college students was properly analyzed ( $\alpha = .70$ ; Ballester, Gil, & Giménez, 2007).

135 We present the SCS validated in this work for the Spanish population in 136 Appendix A.

### 137 Procedure

We informed 1,196 participants of the purpose of the study. The research 138 team told participants that they would be assessed on several sexual be-139 haviors in young people. Then, they completed the SCS voluntarily, anony-140 141 mously, and confidentially in one sitting during class time thanks to the collaboration of lecturers in different degree courses. In addition, the first 142 143 300 tested students also responded to questionnaires described earlier. After a week, 100 randomly selected participants answered the SCS a second time. 144 145 Our research group translated the Sexual Sensation Seeking Scale (Kalichman et al., 1994) and the SCS (Kalichman et al., 1994) according to the established 146 international strategies (Hambleton, Merenda, & Spielberger, 2005). 147

### 148 Statistical Analysis

149 We used SPSS to perform all of our analyses. We used a principal compo-150 nent factor analysis using varimax rotation to ascertain the factorial structure

of the questionnaire. In addition, we performed a descriptive analysis of 151 items and calculated internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. 152 We examined convergent validity through Pearson correlations between the 153 SCS and other constructs related to HIV prevention (total score of Sexual 154 Sensation Seeking Scale, Beck Depression Inventory, and an item from the 155 Cuestionario de Prevención del Sida that requested information about the 156 number of sexual partners). Selection was carried out according to the re-157 158 lationship between these elements and sexual compulsivity in the literature (Benostch et al., 1999; Gullete & Lions, 2005; Kalichman, Greenberg, & Abel, 159 160 1997; Kalichman & Rompa, 1995, 2001; Raymond, Coleman, & Miner, 2003). We calculated test-retest reliability through Pearson's correlation coefficient. 161

#### RESULTS

163 Factorial Structure of the SCS

We obtained an index of .896 in the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test, and Bartlett test of sphericity results of  $\chi^2(45) = 3551.851$ , p < .001. We therefore concluded that factor analysis was appropriate.

We performed a factor analysis by extracting the principal components 167 168 with varimax rotation, revealing a two-factor solution with eigenvalues higher than one, which explained 52.74% of total variance (Table 2). The first fac-169 tor, with an eigenvalue of 4.237, accounted for 42.37% of the variance and 170 included five items (1, 2, 3, 4, and 10) that represented an "interference of 171 sexual behavior" whereby sexual compulsivity caused interpersonal relation-172 ship problems and social maladjustment. The second one, with an eigenvalue 173 of 1.037, accounted for 10.37% of variance and represented a "failure to con-174trol sexual impulses" and entailed personal discomfort associated with sexual 175 compulsivity (Items 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9). 176

### 177 Descriptive Analysis of Items

In the total sample, the ratings given to the items ranged between 1.141 and 1.623 Table 3 shows that Items 5 and 6 had the highest scores and Items 2 and 4 had the lowest. In the men sample, the scores ranged between 1.24 and 1.84. Items 6 and 9 scored higher, while Items 2 and 4 scored lower. In the female sample, Items 5 and 6 were rated higher. In both samples, Items 2 and 4 were rated lower.

# 184 Internal Consistency

185 To analyze internal consistency, we calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient 186 for total scale ( $\alpha = .837$ ). Correlations of individual items with corrected total

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<b>TABLE 2.</b> Results of a Principal Component	nts Analysis	
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Subscale and items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Communalities
Interference of sexual behavior			
<ol> <li>My sexual appetite has gotten in the way of my relationships.</li> </ol>	0.690	0.221	0.525
2. My sexual thoughts and behaviors are causing problems in my life.	0.751	0.128	0.581
<ol><li>My desires to have sex have disrupted my daily life.</li></ol>	0.674	0.315	0.553
<ol> <li>I sometimes fail to meet my commitments and responsibilities because of my sexual behaviors.</li> </ol>	0.603	0.174	0.394
10. It has been difficult for me to find sex partners who desire having sex as much as I want to.	0.547	0.223	0.349
Failure to control sexual impulses			
5. I sometimes get so horny I could lose control.	0.118	0.765	0.600
<ol><li>I find myself thinking about sex while at work.</li></ol>	0.181	0.708	0.534
7. I feel that my sexual thoughts and feeling are stronger than I am.	0.265	0.773	0.669
8. I have to struggle to control my sexual thoughts and behavior.	0.399	0.682	0.624
9. I think about sex more than I would like to.	0.413	0.524	0.445

score of the SCS, that is, the total score regardless of the item concerned,
ranged between 0.434 and 0.675 (see Table 3). In the interference subscale,
correlations ranged between 0.402 and 0.549. In the failure to control sexual

190 impulses subscale, correlations ranged between 0.505 and 0.661.

### 191 Construct Validity

To examine convergent validity, we used data from 300 participants who answered the SCS, the Sexual Sensation Seeking Scale (Kalichman & Rompa, 194 1995), the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck et al., 1979), and the Cuestionario de Prevención del Sida (Ballester et al., 2004). Of total participants, 18 were removed because of a failure to respond to all items in the questionnaires. Therefore, we used data from 282 participants.

### 198 Convergent Validity

199 We calculated convergent validity using Pearson's correlation coefficient be-

200 tween the SCS, the Sexual Sensation Seeking Scale (Kalichman & Rompa,

201 1995), the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck et al., 1979) and the number

202 of sexual partners, an item included in CPS (Ballester et al., 2004). Sexual

	Total $(N = 1, 196)$	tal 1,196)	Men (n = 302)	Men = 302)	Women $(n = 891)$	nen 891)	Item-to-total correlation for Sexual	Item-to-total	Item-to-total
Item	М	SD	M	SD	M	SD	Scale	for Factor 1	for Factor 2
1. My sexual appetite has gotten in the way of my relationships	1.192	0.512	1.37	0.65	1.13	0.44	0.530	0.542	
2. My sexual thoughts and behaviors are cutsing problems in my life.	1.159	0.466	1.27	0.60	1.12	0.40	0.493	0.524	
3. My desires to have sex have disrupted my daily life.	1.185	0.487	1.35	0.65	1.13	0.40	0.584	0.549	
4. I sometimes fail to meet my commitments and responsibilities because of my sexual behaviors.	1.141	0.407	1.24	0.52	1.10	0.36	0.434	0.424	
<ul><li>5. I sometimes get so horny I could lose control.</li><li>6. I find myself thinking about sex while at</li></ul>	1.515 1.623	$0.787 \\ 0.801$	$\begin{array}{c} 1.67\\ 1.84\end{array}$	$0.91 \\ 0.88$	$1.46 \\ 1.55$	0.74 0.76	0.525 0.536		0.546 0.545
Work. 7. I feel that my sexual thoughts and feeling are	1.285	0.587	1.47	0.74	1.22	0.51	0.650		0.661
8. I have to struggle to control my sexual thoughts and behavior.	1.288	0.573	1.50	0.75	1.22	0.47	0.675		0.642
9. I think about sex more than I would like to. 10. It has been difficult for me to find sex	$1.434 \\ 1.249$	0.722 0.598	$1.75 \\ 1.53$	0.86 0.78	$1.33 \\ 1.16$	0.64 0.50	$0.560 \\ 0.435$	0.402	0.505
partners who desire having sex as much as I want to.									

TABLE 3. Descriptive Analysis of Items

compulsivity rarely—if ever—stands alone. There are often comorbid issues 203 in sexual compulsivity such as sexual dysfunction, physiological issues, other 204 substances or addictions, depression and anxiety, or posttraumatic stress dis-205 order (Delmonico & Griffin, 2011). Furthermore, there are several studies in 206 literature that have concluded that sexual compulsivity and sexual sensation 207 seeking had a significant contribution to realization of sexual risk behaviors 208 (Beck, Thombs, Mahoney, & Fingar, 1995; Reece et al., 2001). As expected, 209 210 our results show that the scale had a significant positive correlation with Sexual Sensation Seeking Scale (r = 0.444, p < .000), Beck Depression In-211 212 ventory (r = 0.161, p < .007) and with the number of sexual partners, an item of Cuestionario de Prevención del Sida (r = .203, p < .001). 213

### 214 Test–Retest Reliability

Of the total sample (N = 1,196), 100 young people answered the SCS a week later, but 9 of these were excluded because of their failure to answer any of the items. We therefore analyzed test-retest reliability with 91 participants by calculating Pearson's correlation coefficient. There were significant correlations in both total scale and subscales between the two occasions of administration. Thus, correlation between total scale score in each pass was 0.725 (p < .01).

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### DISCUSSION

In previous studies, Kalichman and Cain (2004) and McBride et al. (2008) 223 found a two-factor solution for the SCS. Both called these factors in the 2.2.4same way: Factor 1 was called social disruptiveness and Factor 2 was called 225 226 personal discomfort. However, some items (2, 5, 6, and 7) are grouped on opposite factors on these studies. In our study, there is also a two-227 228 factor solution, but we have named them differently. Factor 1 was labeled as interference of sexual behavior, while Factor 2 was called "failure to control 229 sexual impulses When analyzing the two factors obtained, it is apparent that 230 they both reflect variations in factor loadings of individual items compared 231 to those obtained in the study by McBride et al. (2008), which was also 232 conducted with a sample of young people. However, our results are similar 233 234 to those obtained by Kalichman and Cain (2004) in a sample of men and women receiving services from sexually transmitted infection clinic with 235 different ages to those in our study. There is a difference in factor loading of 236 237 Item 10, "It has been difficult for me to find sex partners who desire having sex as much as I want to." The item belongs to the personal discomfort factor 238 in the study of Kalichman et al. (2004), while it belongs to the *interference* 239 of sexual behavior factor in our sample. 240

Relating to descriptive analysis of the items, the sample of the present study has the lowest scores of sexual compulsivity compared with other samples in other studies.

Because sexual compulsivity has been associated to risky sexual behav-244 iors and increased sexual frequency, it is reasonable that means obtained 245 in the college students sample were lower than those of other that assessed 246 സ്പM/MSMW campus cruisers (Reece & Dodge, 2004), people living with HIV 247 248 Denotsch, Kalichman, & Pinkerton, 2001; Kalichman & Rompa, 2001; Reece, 2003) or gay/bisexual male sex workers (Parson et al., 2001). In contrast, it 249 250 is important to note that in all studies the mean score of sexual compulsivity is higher in men than in women; educational and social factors may possibly 251 account for these differences.

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In terms of reliability, SCS has shown good internal consistency in total 253 scale ( $\alpha = .837$ ) and in subscales. (Internal consistency of the scale obtained 254 in this study is slightly higher than that found by Dodge et al. (2004) among 255 256 students aged 18 to 25 years old ( $\alpha = .82$ ). However, our result is slightly 257 lower than the pilot study of the scale undertaken by Kalichman et al. (1994) in which participants were sexually active men who considered themselves 258 259 homosexual ( $\alpha = .89$ ). It was also been slightly lower than the original study by Kalichman and Rompa (1995) of gay men ( $\alpha = .86$ ) and of primarily 260 261 African American men and women in inner-city areas on low incomes ( $\alpha$  = .88). In any case, few differences are mere hundredths, that is, the results 262 are virtually identical. 263

In relation to convergent validity, this study found significant relation-264 265 ships between SCS and another measures. As expected, the Sexual Sensation Seeking Scale, the number of sexual partners and the participation in risky 266 behavior correlated positively and significantly with SCS. Our result is con-267 268 sistent with those obtained in previous studies, where it was concluded that the Sensation seeking and sexual compulsivity had a significant contribution 269 270 to realization of risky sexual behaviors (Beck et al, 1995; Reece et al., 2001). In another study, age, sexual sensation seeking, and sexual compulsivity 271 272 were shown as predictors of risk behaviors (Gullette & Lyons, 2005). Referring to depression, our results show significant positive correlations between 273 this variable and sexual compulsivity. This is also in line with the literature 274reviewed. Across studies, people with high scores on compulsivity have 275 extremely high rates of psychological disorders, in particular depression, 276 anxiety disorders and substance use disorders (Black et al., 1997; Raymond 277 278 et al., 2003).

As for the scale's temporal stability, the results of this study show that it is high for the scale. That value is similar to previous studies (Kalichman & Rompa, 1995). The results obtained suggest that the SCS built by Kalichman et al. (1994) and translated by our team for Spanish population, is an appropriate measure for evaluating sexual compulsivity related with

HIV prevention in young people. The scale shows adequate psychometricproperties.

Our study has some limitations that should be considered in future research, such as number of participants of each sex—there were many more women than men in this study— and sexual orientation—most of the individuals in this sample were heterosexual students.

It is highly desirable to complete the sample with more men and people with different sexual orientations. Furthermore, it would be interesting to use a clinical group of patients suffering from sexual compulsivity to compare their scores with those of the general population and thus to establish a cutoff point with greater clinical significance.

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400		APPENDIX I
401		ESCALA DE COMPULSIVIDAD SEXUAL
402		Ballester, Gil, Ruiz, Giménez y Gómez (Traducida de
403		Kalichman et al., 1994)

Q18 404 A continuación se presentan una serie de afirmaciones sobre tu compor 405 tamiento sexual. Por favor, contesta con sinceridad, tus respuestas son anónimas y confidenciales.

	Nada característico de mi	Algo característico de mí	Bastante característico de mí	Muy característico de mí
<ol> <li>Mi gran apetito sexual ha sido un obstáculo en mis relaciones.</li> </ol>				
<ol> <li>Mis pensamientos y comportamientos sexuales me están causando problemas en la vida.</li> </ol>				
3. Mis deseos de tener sexo han afectado a mi vida cotidiana.				
<ol> <li>A veces no consigo cumplir con compromisos y responsabilidades a causa de mis comportamientos sexuales.</li> </ol>				
5. A veces llego a ponerme tan caliente que podría perder el control.				
<ol> <li>Me sorprendo a mi mismo pensando sobre sexo en el trabajo.</li> </ol>				
<ol> <li>Siento que mis pensamientos y sensaciones sexuales son más fuertes que yo.</li> </ol>				
8. Tengo que luchar para controlar mis pensamientos y				
comportamientos sexuales. 9. Pienso en sexo más de lo que me gustaría. 10. Me ha resultado difícil encontrar parejas sexuales que desearan tener sexo tanto como yo.				

Total score: Sum of all items rated from 1 to 4.

Subscale "Interference": Sum of items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 10.

Subscale "Failure to control sexual impulses": Sum of items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.