Seventh research

Development and validation of an Arabic-language headache questionnaire for population-based surveys

Background: The reported prevalence of headache disorders in Arab regions varies considerably between countries. This may be due to a lack of standardized survey instruments that capture the prevalence.

Objectives: Our goal was to construct and validate a structured headache questionnaire for Arabic-speaking headache patients to be used as an epidemiological survey instrument.

Methods: We developed a culturally adapted interviewer-administered questionnaire in Arabic language comprising two sets of questions. The first set included personal and sociodemographic data together with a screening question regarding the presence of headaches over the last year. The second set was designed to define the type and pattern of headaches according to the International Classification of Headache Disorders criteria (for subjects with "yes" answers on the screening question). Validation process took place in two phases through probability random sampling selected from 1,221 headache subjects collected in an epidemiological survey 3 (n=70) and 6 months (n=232) later. A detailed assessment of patients' headaches was performed by neurologists (blinded from the questionnaire diagnosis) who clinically assessed the patients' headache.

Results: The validity of the questionnaire was tested in 232 subjects with a mean age of 41.2±10.9 years, 72.8% of whom were females. The mean time to complete the questionnaire was 8.4±1.7 minutes. The intraclass correlation coefficient was 0.903 (95% confidence interval: 0.875–0.925), the Cronbach κ coefficient was 0.775 (95% confidence interval: 0.682–0.837), and the percentage of agreement was 84.5%.

Conclusion: Our results support the use of this comprehensive questionnaire as a valid tool for headache assessment among Arabic-speaking patients.

Keywords: Arabic, Egypt, headache, questionnaire, validation