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Psychometric Characteristics of the Heart Failure Somatic Perception Scale in a European Heart Failure Population

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Introductions: How the symptoms of HF are perceived and reported by patients is variable, and this variation influences the symptom assessment and documentation by clinicians. Because the symptoms can predict morbidity and mortality, a precise assessment of patient perception of HF symptoms, using reliable and valid instruments, is important, such as the Heart Failure Somatic Perception Scale (HFSPS). Although the construct validity and reliability of the HFSPS have been found supportive for measuring HF symptoms, the psychometric properties of the 18-item version have only been tested in one American study, but never in European population.

Purpose: to test the validity and reliability of the HFSPS.

Methods: The enrolment of the participants was carried out during both hospitalization and outpatient appointments. The HFSPS factorial structure was assessed using Confirmative Factor Analysis. The concurrent validity of the HFSPS was evaluated by correlating its factor scores with the Kansas City Cardiomyopathy Questionnaire scores using Pearson’s r. Finally, the internal consistency reliability of the HFSPS was evaluated using the factor score determinacy coefficient and Cronbach’s a.

Results: Most of the participants (n=321) were males (56.6%), with a mean age of 71.48 years old (SD, 12.75) and in New York Heart Association class II (61.8%). The CFA, testing the original HFSPS four-factor structure, resulted with the following fit indices: χ² (126, N=321)=260.38, p<0.001, RMSEA=0.06, CFI=0.93, TLI=0.91 and SRMR=0.04, which are considered good. With regard to the concurrent validity, all the correlations with the Kansas City Cardiomyopathy Questionnaire were statistically significant. The HFSPS reliability resulted with factor score determinacy coefficients between 0.87 and 0.94 for the four factors. The Cronbach’s a for the total scale was 0.91.

Conclusions: The validity and reliability of the HFSPS were supportive in this European sample. The HFSPS can be used to assess how bothersome HF signs and symptoms are in order to improve their management.