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Evaluation of the psychometric properties of the French WCCNR stomatitis instrument to determine the degree of severity of stomatitis

Nicole Allard
Université Du Québec À Rimouski, Canada

Significance: Stomatitis, an inflammation and ulceration of the mouth, is a common and devastating complication of cancer therapy. Incidence levels range from 10% to 90%. Stomatitis can cause treatment delays and dose reduction, severe pain, weight loss, difficulty talking, infections, emotional distress and altered morbidity and mortality. The WCCNR developed a new tool, the WCCNR Stomatitis Staging System. This 3-item instrument was found to be reliable and valid both in French and English.

Problem & Purpose: There are several problems with the currently available stomatitis assessment tools. First, assessors can arrive at a total score in a variety of different ways, depending on how they scored different parts of the mouth. As a result, the meanings of the scores obtained are clinically inconsistent. This is problematic from a nursing point of view since changes that warrant an alteration in intervention may remain undetected. The use of a simple tool that yields valid and reliable scores would be easier to incorporate into a routine nursing assessment. The purpose of this study is to address the validity and reliability of the translated 4 items, French version plus 2 subjective items: pain and ability to eat.

Methods & Analysis: Factor analysis will assess the validity of the 4 factors. Item total correlation evaluation will be used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. Weighted Kappa or intra-class correlation coefficients will be used to test the instrument's inter-rater reliability. Implications for practice, education and research will be discussed.

Biography

Nicole Allard is currently a Professor at the University of Quebec in Rimouski, campus of Levis. She holds a Master Degree in nursing from the University of Montreal and also a PhD in nursing from the University of Toronto. Her main areas of research are: symptom management in cancer patients and survivors, nursing interventions, validation of instruments and evidence-based practice.

Nicole_Allard@uqar.ca

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