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Assessing the severity of panic disorder
and agoraphobia:
Validity, reliability and objectivity of the
Turkish translation of the Panic and
Agoraphobia Scale (P&A)

Ümit Tural^a, Hüray Fidaner^{a,*}, Tunc Alkin^a,
Borwin Bandelow^b

^a*School of Medicine, Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir, Turkey*

^b*Department of Psychiatry, University of Göttingen, Göttingen, Germany*

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to determine the psychometric properties of the Turkish translation of both the observer-rated (P&A_o) and self-rated (P&A_s) versions of the Panic and Agoraphobia Scale (P&A). Discriminant and convergent validity of P&A were assessed in patients with panic disorder with or without agoraphobia ($n = 119$), by comparing the P&A with the Clinical Global Impression Scale (CGI), Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAMA), Phobia and Anxiety sub-scales of Symptom Check List, Spielberger State and Trait Anxiety Inventory and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). Inter-rater and test–retest reliability were determined. Correlation coefficients between the CGI and the P&A_o and the P&A_s were .85 and .74, respectively, and .85 between the two versions of the P&A. Cronbach's α for the P&A_o and the P&A_s was .88 and .86, respectively. The Turkish version of the P&A has yielded good psychometric properties and was found to be a reliable instrument for assessing severity in panic disorder. © 2002 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Panic disorder; Panic and Agoraphobia Scale; Measurement

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +90-232-2777-777x4153/4154; fax: +90-232-2788-191.
E-mail address: fidaner@superonline.com (H. Fidaner).

1. Introduction

Panic disorder is a common disorder which substantially impairs daily functioning and quality of life of the affected patients. Lifetime prevalence of panic disorder is estimated to be 1.5–3.8% (Angst, 1995; Maison, Warshaw, & Keller, 1993). During the past decade increased recognition and the availability of effective pharmacological and psychosocial treatments has stimulated research on panic disorder. However, treatment studies lack consistency in the measures of severity assessment of the disorder (Bandelow, Hajak, Holzrichter, Kunert, & Rüther, 1995; Shear & Maser, 1994). Clinical trials focusing on the efficacy of treatments require repeated severity assessments and measurements that are sensitive to change. Recently, tools for assessment of the severity of panic disorder were introduced (Bandelow, 1995; Shear et al., 1997).

Among them, the Panic and Agoraphobia Scale (P&A) was designed to identify and rate essential features of panic disorder with or without agoraphobia (Bandelow, 1995; Bandelow, 1999; Bandelow et al., 1995). Panic attacks, agoraphobia, anticipatory anxiety, disability, and worries about health were taken into consideration in the P&A. Items related to these different aspects of panic disorder also constitute the five sub-scales of P&A, which can be assessed separately. The P&A's sensitivity to change allows researchers to compare the efficacy of different treatments (Bandelow et al., 1998). The P&A has already been utilized in a number of clinical studies (Bandelow, Broocks, Meyer, Kunert, & Rüther, 1998; Biber & Alkin, 1999; Broocks et al., 1998; Pande, Pollack, Crockatt, et al., 2000).

Today, it is common in most countries to use scales that have been developed in other languages (mostly English), to translate them and to apply them without further validation. However, as international multicenter trials become increasingly more frequent, psychometric scales should also be validated in the language of the country they are used in.

Until recently, there was no instrument for measurement of severity of panic disorder and agoraphobia in the Turkish language. Researchers who deal with panic disorder in Turkey had to use inadequate anxiety measurement tools to assess panic disorder severity. A survey on Turkish research articles published between 1993 and 1998 revealed that studies on panic disorder were performed by using scales which were developed for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and not for panic disorder. Thus, the aim of the present study was to validate the Turkish version of P&A.

2. Methods

2.1. Subjects

The study sample included 119 panic disorder patients (72% women) with or without agoraphobia consecutively admitted to the Dokuz Eylül University

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