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OPEN PEER REVIEW

Constructing and Validating Iranians' COVID-19-related Stressors (ICRS) and Its Relation with Mental Health

Mahdi Shahrezagamasaei, Shima Shahyad, Seyed Hassan Saadat

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About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

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1 Original submission

6 comments · 17 Aug 2021 – 12 Nov 2021

Referee 1 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 17 Aug 2021

1. Please indicate the study's design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract.
2. In the introduction, explain the scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported.
3. In the methods section, describe the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection.
4. In the methods section, explain how the study size was arrived at.
5. In the statistical methods section, explain how missing data were addressed.
6. In the results section, give characteristics of study participants and information on exposures and potential confounders.
7. In the discussion, give a cautious overall interpretation of results considering objectives, limitations, multiplicity of analyses, results from similar studies, and other relevant evidence.
8. Discuss the generalizability of the study results more clearly.

Referee 2 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 23 Aug 2021

Please:
Your title is confusing; this confusion extends throughout the article as well. If you are developing a scale, you are not in a position to draw conclusions from it until you have proved its validity and reliability.
The whole body of the article needs literal revision.
You need to describe the characteristics of the Iranian population or aspects of their lives affected by COVID-19 that you suppose have been ignored by current scales and are covered by your scale. Indeed, you are expected to explain the unique aspects of the scale.
Please explain clearly how and from where you derived the items.
I doubt that the statistical population in your study is people aged 20 years and older living in Tehran because the target population was limited to the social networks of 2 people. On the other hand, the demographic characteristics of the participants show that most of them were educated and employed women, which means we cannot disregard sampling bias.
"standardized factor loads above 0.3 were considered moderate to strong factor loads"?! This is low.
GHQ is a screening scale, not a diagnostic scale, so please use the term "mental health problems" instead of "mental disorders" when discussing its results.

Soheila Shahshahani Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 14 Oct 2021

This is valuable work. Here are my comments:
The abstract is too long.
The need for the research is not explained well.
Are all the participants living in Tehran? They were the contacts of two psychology students, and it is possible that they live in other places, even outside Iran.
By choosing the criterion of "being a cyberspace user" for participants, the authors missed other people who may have stress. On the other hand, seeking bad news and spending a lot of time in cyberspace can lead a person to be anxious or stressed.

In the Reliability part, are Cronbach's alpha coefficients satisfactory for all five factors or for seven?
The discussion part is weak. It would be better for the authors to compare the results of this study with those of other studies. The sample of the current study is limited to those who can use cyberspace. The authors selected them by presenting the questionnaire to people through the WhatsApp and Telegram social networks of two psychology students. This can impair access to a normal community. On the other hand, in comparison to other studies, the sample size of this study is very small. Please explain why they didn't use the other questionnaire, which was administered to a larger sample. They could evaluate its psychometric characteristics in Tehran.
A large part of the discussion is related to methodology and findings.
At the end of the second paragraph of the discussion part, the authors said, "the Persian version of this questionnaire can be used as a valid and reliable tool in mental health studies". Is there any other version of this questionnaire? If not, please rewrite the sentence.
In the discussion, the authors write, "The reason that increased concern about changing family interactions inversely predicts mental health may be because people who are concerned about how family interactions change are more concerned with interactions than those who are indifferent to the change". This conclusion does not seem correct. It seems that family interaction is important and is related to mental health. Did you compare the mental health status of people who are concerned about family interaction with that of others who are not concerned about it?

Referee 3 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 12 Nov 2021

1- Please note the comments made in the text. The text had many editorial errors, and it should follow the academic writing guidelines.
2- The importance of designing a new questionnaire should be explained.
3- Please revise the title based on academic writing guidelines.
4- In the introduction, please clarify whether there are any existing questionnaires for measuring COVID-related stressors. Explain the strengths and weaknesses of each scale. Explain the importance of developing and validating this questionnaire. Explain why you need to measure COVID-related stressors using the new scale.
5- The two goals of your research are not clear. Please clarify the goals of your study.
6- Please explain the method and stages of your research. Explain the method you used to develop the questionnaire and describe the stages.
7- In Designing the questions: how did you extract these 40 items?

Associate Editor

MAJOR REVISION 12 Nov 2021

Reviewer 1
1- Please note the comments made in the text. The text had many editorial errors, and it should follow the academic writing guideline.
2- The importance of designing a new questionnaire should be explained.
3- Please revise the title based on academic writing guidelines.
4- In the introduction, please clarify whether there are any existing questionnaires for measuring COVID-related stressors. Explain the strengths and weaknesses of each scale. Express the importance of developing and validating this questionnaire. Explain why you need to measure COVID-related stressors using the new scale.
5- The two goals of your research are not clear. Please clarify the goals of your study.

6- Please explain the method and stages of your research. Explain the method you used to develop the questionnaire and describe the stages.
7- In Designing the questions: how did you extract these 40 items?
8-

Reviewer 2

1. Please indicate the study's design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract.
2. In the introduction, explain the scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported.
3. In the method section, describe the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection.
4. In the method section, explain how the study size was arrived at.
5. In the statistical methods section, explain how missing data were addressed.
6. In the results section, give characteristics of study participants and information on exposures and potential confounders.
7. In the discussion, give a cautious overall interpretation of the results considering objectives, limitations, multiplicity of analyses, results from similar studies, and other relevant evidence.
8. Discuss the generalizability of the study results more clearly.

Reviewer 3

This is valuable work. Here are my comments:
1- The abstract is too long.
2- The need for research is not explained well.
3- Are all the participants living in Tehran? They were the contacts of two students of psychology, and it is possible that they live in other places, even outside Iran.
4- By choosing the item "being a cyberspace user" for participants, the authors missed other people who may have stress. On the other hand, seeking bad news and spending a lot of time in cyberspace can lead a person to be anxious or stressed.
5- In the Reliability part, are Cronbach's alpha coefficients satisfactory for all five factors or for seven?
6- The discussion part is weak. It would be better for the authors to compare the results of this study with those of other studies.
7- The sample in the current study is limited to those who can use cyberspace. The authors selected them by presenting the questionnaire to people using the WhatsApp and Telegram social networks of two students of psychology. This can impair access to a normal community. On the other hand, in comparison to other studies, the sample size of this study is so small. Please explain why they didn't use the other questionnaire that was administered to a larger sample. They could evaluate its psychometric characteristics in Tehran.
8- A large part of the discussion is related to methodology and findings.
9- At the end of the second paragraph of the discussion part, the authors said, "the Persian version of this questionnaire can be used as a valid and reliable tool in mental health studies". Is there any other version of this questionnaire? If not, please rewrite the sentence.
10- In the discussion, the authors write, "The reason that increased concern about changing family interactions inversely predicts mental health may be because people who are concerned about how family interactions change are more concerned with interactions than those who are indifferent to the change".
11- This conclusion does not seem correct. It seems that family interaction is important and is related to mental health. Did you compare the mental health status of persons who are concerned about family interaction with that of others who are not concerned about it?

Reviewer 4

1- Your title is confusing; this confusion spreads over the whole article as well. If you are developing a scale, you are not in a position to draw conclusions from it as long as you have not proved its validity and reliability.

2- The whole body of the article needs language revision.
3- You need to describe the characteristics of the Iranian population or aspects of their lives affected by COVID-19 that you suppose have been ignored by current scales and that your scale covers. Indeed, you are expected to explain the unique aspects of the scale.
4- Please explain clearly how and from where you derived the items.
5- I doubt that the statistical population in your study is people aged 20 years and older living in Tehran because the target population was limited to the social networks of 2 people. On the other hand, the demographic characteristics of the participants show that most of them were educated and employed women, which means we cannot disregard sampling bias.
6- “standardized factor loads above 0.3 were considered moderate to strong factor loads”?! This is low.
7- GHQ is a screening scale, not a diagnostic scale, so please use the term “mental health problems” instead of “mental disorders” when discussing its results.

Editor-in-Chief MAJOR REVISION 12 Nov 2021

Your paper has been evaluated by external peer reviewers. Please revise your paper according to the reviewers’ comments.

After revision, authors are obliged to upload a Word file containing the reviewers’ comments and their point-by-point replies to all comments.

Besides, please pay attention to the word count limit:
Word count limits are stated at this link: http://kowsarpub.com/en/index.php/services/for-authors/895-word-count

We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript. Thank you for sending your work to the Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. The full manuscript file must be highlighted to indicate the revised text.

2

Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Dear Editor/Reviewers

Thank you for your letter and the reviewers' comments concerning our manuscript entitled "

Constructing and validating Iranians' Covid-19-related stressors ICRS) and it's relation to mental health: SEM approach". Those comments are valuable and helpful for revising and improving our manuscript. We have studied comments carefully and have made a correction, which we hope to meet with approval.

We tried our best to improve the manuscript and made some changes in the manuscript and highlighted. We appreciate Editors/Reviewers' warm work earnestly and hope that the correction will meet with approval. Once again, thank you very much for your comments and suggestions.

Thank you for receiving our manuscript and considering it for review.

We appreciate your time and look forward to your response.

Sincerely

Corresponding author

Reviewer 1

1.please Indicate the study's design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract

The study's design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract was corrected.

2.In introduction explain the scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported

In introduction scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported was explained. *(p3,4, highlighted paragraph)*

3.In method describe the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection

In method the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection were described.(*p 4,5)*

4.In method explain how the study size was arrived at

In method the rationale for this sample size was explained. The sample size was descried based on reference 8 (p. 4)

5.In statistical methods explain how missing data were addressed

Based on settings in google form, answer to current question was necessary to answering next question, so we have no missing data

6.In result section Give characteristics of study participants and information on exposures and potential confounders

In result section. (p8) and limitation section (p15) characteristics of study participants and information on exposures and potential confounders were given

7.In discussion give a cautious overall interpretation of results considering objectives, limitations, multiplicity of analyses, results from similar studies, and other relevant evidence

In conclusion section (p. 16) and discussion give a cautious overall interpretation of results (p. 13-15)

8.Discuss the generalisability of the study results more clearly

generalizability of the study results was added (p.15)

Reviewer 2:

1- Please note the comments made in the text The text had many editorial errors and it should follow the academic writing guideline

Base on comments made in the text in introduction stressor concepts and its domain was explained. (p 2, paragraph 3) and, editorial errors were considered. (In inclusion and exclusion criteria ,title and abstract)

2- The importance of designing a new questionnaire should be explained

The importance of designing a new questionnaire was explained (p 4) the scientific background and rationale for investigation are considered (p 4)

3- please revise the title based on academic writing

The title was revised based on academic writing.

4- in the introduction; please clarify if there are any existing questionnaires for measuring covid related stressors explain the Strengths and weaknesses of each scale express the importance of developing and validating this questionnaire explain why you need to measure covid related stressors by the new scale

in the introduction; existing questionnaires for measuring covid related stressors the Strengths and weaknesses of each scale express the importance of

developing and validating this questionnaire was explained. Also, the necessarily to conducting the new scale was explained (p.4)

5- two goals of your research are not clear please clarify the goals of your study

two goals of your research were clarified (p 4, end of introduction)

6- please explain the method and stages of your research. express the method you develop the questionnaire and describe the stages

Express the method that develop the questionnaire and describe the stages in

follow section: Iranians' Covid-19-related stressors (ICRS): *(p. 6-8).*

7- in Designing the questions: how did you extract these 40 items?

In Designing the questions when we reach to saturation (p 6)

Reviewer 3

this a valuable work. Here are my comments:

1- The abstract is too long.

The abstract was shorted (p 1)

2- The need for research is not explained good.

in the introduction; existing questionnaires for measuring covid related stressors the Strengths and weaknesses of each scale express the importance of developing and validating this questionnaire was explained. Also, the necessarily to conducting the new scale was explained (p.4)

3- Are all the participants living in Tehran? They were the contacts of two student of psychology and it is possible that they live in other places even out of Iran.

all the participants living in Tehran. One of the important items in questionnaire was current location and *The two responsible students called only participants that live in Tehran.*

4- By choosing the item of “being a cyberspace user” for participants, the authors missed other people that may have stress. On the other hand, seeking bad news and spending much of time in cyberspace, can lead a person to be anxious or stressful.

1-Due to the prevalence of Covid-19, questionnaires were distributed by convenience sampling method and online conduction. we assumed considering the high percent of availability of cell phone all participants have what’s app and telegram. also being a cyberspace user was considered as one the major consideration in limitation . (p 15)

2-in the introduction; existing questionnaires for measuring covid related stressors the Strengths and weaknesses of each scale express the importance of developing and validating this questionnaire was explained. Also, the necessarily to conducting the new scale was explained (p4) and rational of sample size explain in (p4)

5- In the Reliability part, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all five factors are satisfactory or seven?

Correct it.In the Reliability part, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for seven factors are satisfactory (p 11)

6- The discussion part is weak. It is better that the authors compare the results of this study with other ones.

Discussion was modified based on recommended comments.(p 13, last paragraph)

7- The sample size of current study is limited to those who can use cyberspace. The authors select them by presenting the questionnaire to people by using WhatsApp and Telegram social networks of two student of psychology. This can impair access to a normal community. On the other hand, in comparison to other studies, the sample size of this study is so small. Please describe that why they didn’t use the other questionnaire that performed on a larger sample size? They could evaluate the psychometric characteristic of them in Tehran.

1-Due to the prevalence of Covid-19, questionnaires were distributed by convenience sampling method and online conduction. *we assumed considering the high percent of availability of cell phone all participants have what’s app and telegram. also being a cyberspace user was considered as one the major consideration in limitation . (p15)*

2-in the introduction; existing questionnaires for measuring covid related stressors the Strengths and weaknesses of each scale express the importance of developing

and validating this questionnaire was explained. Also, the necessarily to conducting the new scale was explained (p4) and rational of sample size explain in (p4)

8- A large part of the discussion part is related to methodology and finding.

Second goal of this study is not about psychometric results. Factors that predict mental health during covid-19 and explain them in pandemic situation was given in (p14,15).

9- At the end of the second paragraph of discussion part, the authors said, "the Persian version of this questionnaire can be used as a valid and reliable tool in mental health studies". Is there any other version for this questionnaire? If no, please rewrite the sentence.

Correct it.There is any no other version for this questionnaire (p. 14 , first paragraph)

10- In discussion the authors write, "The reason that increased concern about changing family interactions inversely predicts mental health may be because people who are concerned about how family interactions change are more concerned with interactions than those who are indifferent to the change". This conclusion does not seem correct. It seems that the family interaction is important and is related to mental health. Did you compare the mental health status of persons who are concerned about family interaction whit others who are not concerned about it?

*Mental health problem not mental health. We correct it as describe bellow:*Some studies suggested that the reason that increased concern about changing family interactions inversely predicts mental health problem may be because people who are concerned about how family interactions change are more concerned with interactions than those who are indifferent to the change.Although this is an assumption and need to more assessment *(p.15)*

Reviewer 4

1- Your title is confusing; this confusion spreads over the whole article as well. If you are developing a scale, you are not in a position to conclude from it as long as you have not proved its validity and reliability.

The title rewrites clearly (p 1)

2- The whole body of the article needs literal revision

Whole body of the article was revised literally (highlighted section)

3- You need to describe the characteristics of Iranian population or aspects of their lives affected by covid-19, which you supposed that, have been

ignored by current scales and that your scale covers them. Indeed, you are expected to explain the unique aspects of the scale*.*

The unique aspects of our scale were considered (p.4)

4- Please explain clearly how and from where you derived the items.

it explain In designing ***the questions*** *section (p 6) and the questions when we reach to saturation, we ended this process (p 7)*

5- I doubt that the statistical population in your study is people aged 20 years and older living in Tehran because the target population was limited to the social networks of 2 people. On the other hand, demographic characteristics of the participants show that most of them were educated and employed women which mean we cannot disregard sampling bias.

Due to the prevalence of Covid-19, questionnaires were distributed by convenience sampling method. In limitation section we explain this limitation and explain this limitation maybe effect generalization of results to other people (p15)

6- "Standardized factor loads above 0.3 were considered moderate to strong factor loads"?! It's low.

Correct it.Standardized factor loads above 0.5 that were considered strong factor loads (p 10)

7- GHQ is a screening not diagnostic scale so please use the term "mental health problems" instead of "mental disorders" while regarding its results

The term "mental health problems" instead of "mental disorders" was added (p 12)

2 Revision 1

1 comment · 21 May 2022

Editor-in-Chief

MINOR REVISION 21 May 2022

Thank you for your recent revisions.
Your paper has now been evaluated again. According to the reviewers' and associate editor's comments, it needs some more revisions. Please make your revisions according to these comments. I would appreciate it if you could make the revisions as soon as possible using the track changes mode in MS Word and colored text.

3

Revision 2

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Dear Editors and Reviewers:

Thank you for your letter and the reviewers' comments concerning our manuscript entitled **"Constructing and validating Iranians' Covid-19-related stressors ICRS) and it's relation to mental health: SEM approach".** Those comments are valuable and helpful for revising and improving our manuscript. We have studied comments carefully and have made a correction, which we hope to meet with approval.
We tried our best to improve the manuscript and made some changes in the manuscript and highlighted. We appreciate Editors/Reviewers' warm work earnestly and hope that the correction will meet with approval. Once again, thank you very much for your comments and suggestions.

Thank you for receiving our manuscript and considering it for review.

We appreciate your time and look forward to your response.

Corresponding author

Shima Shahyad, Ph. D

Reply to reviewer

1-the body of the text needs literal revision

- ✓ The article was edited grammatically, and highlighted with green color.
- ✓ **2-please state the limitations of other test.**
- ✓ The reasons for constructing a new instrument were considered. (Page.4). Also, the previous studies mentioned (Page. 3).
- ✓ **3-in inclusion criteria please insert age range. moreover, you have to determine the level of literacy required for the participant.**
- ✓ They were added to text.
- ✓ **4- some headline is redundant please correct these mistake.**
- ✓ Some redundant Deleted or merged.
- ✓ **5- please download a similar article, in our journal and rewrite the manuscript according to that**
- ✓ A similar published article downloaded and considered.
- ✓ **6-certainly in doing CFA the sample should be different from EFA. So you have two solutions 1- report just one of two 2-split sample in two sections and analysis CFA**
- ✓ We reported just EFA.
- ✓ **7-type of study and sample size and sampling method this headline is incorrect**
- ✓ Type of study and sample size revised carefully (Page.4).
- ✓ **8- table weren't appropriately organized and 9-organized table 2**
- ✓ The tables (2, 3) were organized.

3 Revision 2

3 comments · 9 Dec 2022 – 22 Dec 2022

Referee 3 Reviewer

ACCEPT 9 Dec 2022

accept

Associate Editor

ACCEPT 9 Dec 2022

dear author
accept

Editor-in-Chief

ACCEPT 22 Dec 2022

We have completed our review of your manuscript and are pleased to inform you that it is being considered for publication in the IJPBS. Note that the publication of your article will be finalized only with your cooperation in the editorial process.
Thank you for your fine contribution. On behalf of the Editors of IJPBS, we look forward to your continued contributions to the Journal.