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Protocol for Developing Validation Studies (PROVAL): A Comprehensive Framework and Illustrative Application

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Protocol for Developing Validation Studies (PROVAL): A Comprehensive Framework and Illustrative Application

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Abstract

Validity is one of the most extensively addressed aspects in the literature, as gathering validity evidence is essential to examine interpretations that support the intended uses of the measures. The specific needs of the target instrument, purposes, and assessment context should guide decisions about which sources of validity evidence to prioritize. Most validation studies currently include a pilot phase to evaluate items and test or questionnaire functioning, alongside validity evidence based on internal structure and relationships with other variables. Some also incorporate expert judgment to provide validity evidence based on test content. However, other sources of validity evidence such as those based on response processes and testing consequences, are less frequently explored. Researchers often follow routine procedures without fully reflecting on the most appropriate validity evidence that could provide better support for the intended purpose of measures. This study introduces PROVAL, a nine-step protocol designed to guide researchers in developing validation studies. PROVAL encourages a reflective, tailored approach to instrument validation by helping researchers identify and prioritize the most relevant validity evidence for their specific needs. An illustration of how to apply PROVAL in designing validation studies will be presented, and its contributions to optimizing resources and supporting instrument purposes will be discussed.

Keywords

validity; Protocol; PROVAL

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