

ORIGINAL RESEARCH—OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Validity and Reliability of the Arabic Version of the Female Genital Self-Image Scale

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. Female genital self-image is significantly related to female sexual function. It has been inadequately investigated in Egypt.

Aim. To translate the original English version of the Female Genital Self-Image Scale (FGSIS) into Arabic and validate the Arabic version (AVFGSIS).

Methods. Validation was carried out for the aspects of face, content, and criterion (concurrent) validity. Studies on test–retest reliability and internal consistency were conducted using Cronbach’s alpha and Pearson correlation, respectively.

Main Outcome Measures. Main outcome measures were the validity and reliability of the AVFGSIS and its domains. Correlations between domain scores on the AVFGSIS and the Arabic version of the Female Sexual Function Index (AVFSFI) were assessed.

Results. A total of 244 married women aged 18–60 years participated in this study. There was a high test–retest correlation ($r > 0.8$). The AVFGSIS was found to have good face and content validity as a whole and for each domain. Significant positive correlations were observed with each domain of the AVFSFI: desire ($r = 0.815$), arousal ($r = 0.861$), lubrication ($r = 0.855$), orgasm ($r = 0.820$), satisfaction ($r = 0.832$), and pain ($r = 0.884$) (all $P < 0.001$).

Conclusions. The AVFGSIS is not only valid but also reliable, as much so as the original English version. In addition, female genital self-image was found to be significantly related to female sexual function. **Mohammed GF and Hassan H. Validity and reliability of the Arabic version of the Female Genital Self-Image Scale. J Sex Med 2014;11:1193–1200.**

Key Words. Arabic; Female Genital Self-Image Scale; Female Sexual Dysfunction; Sexual Well-Being

Introduction

Enjoyment of sexual activity is important to women worldwide. The widespread prevalence of sexual problems presents a potential detriment to well-being for a significant portion of the population [1]. Impairments in sexual function may be attributable to myriad physiological and/or psychological factors. Accumulating research suggests body image is an important psychological factor in women’s sexual well-being [1].

Body image is a key concept to consider when determining what makes sex satisfying or distressing, as concern about one’s physical appearance

can diminish one’s sexual confidence, interest, and enjoyment [2].

While body image-induced sexual avoidance is not classified as a sexual dysfunction, concerns of this type may inhibit women from participating in and enjoying sex [3], which can negatively affect both sexual functioning and sexual satisfaction [4–7]. Recent research has revealed that specific elements of body image may have a unique effect on women’s sexual experiences.

Thus, researchers have recently narrowed their focus to genital self-image as a subfield of body image research that may uniquely contribute to women’s sexual concerns. The idea of genital

self-image originates with the concept of genital identity. It is now considered a subfield of body image, and involves attitudes and feelings toward oneself that are due to experiences indirectly or directly involving one's genitals [8,9]. Therefore, female genital self-image is significantly related to female sexual function and sexual behavior [8,10]. Recently, studies have examined the relationship between genital self-image and sexual well-being, particularly satisfaction and functioning. The short version of the Female Genital Self-Image Scale (FGSIS) is reliable and valid in assessing female genital self-image [8]. However, no part of the FGSIS has been validated in Arabic for use among women in Egypt. It is imperative that an adopted instrument should be culturally relevant and valid for the local population. It is therefore essential to carry out a rigorous translation and validation of the instrument before using it in another population with a different culture. Therefore, this study was conducted, firstly, to translate the original English version of the FGSIS into Arabic and, secondly, to validate the Arabic version.

Methods

Study Design and Setting

This was a cross-sectional study conducted between January and March 2013 at a sexology clinic located at Suez Canal University Hospital, Ismailia, Egypt.

All patients who used the clinic were Egyptians. For patients to be seen in this clinic, they must (i) live near the clinic; (ii) not be staying in a hospital ward; (iii) have been referred by a nearby private practitioner; and (iv) have nonemergency problems. For this study, only persons without existing serious medical illnesses that would impair daily and occupational function were included.

Study Population

Due to limited resources, this study used a nonprobability sampling (universal sampling) method. All patients who attended the clinic during the study period and fulfilled the inclusion criteria were included in this study. Female patients aged between 18 and 60 years, married and having a sexually active partner, able to read and understand the Arabic or English language, and able to give consent were included.

The exclusion criteria were the following: chronic and severe medical illnesses or other

psychiatric illnesses apart from sexual dysfunction, pregnancy or being 2 months or less postpartum, and refusal to give consent. This study was approved by the institutional review board and ethical committee of the Suez Canal University Faculty of Medicine, Ismailia, Egypt; it was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki, and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study included (i) a biodata and sociodemographic profile form; (ii) the Arabic version of the Female Sexual Function Index (AVFSFI); (iii) the Arabic version of the FGSIS (AVFGSIS); and (iv) the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fourth edition (DSM-IV).

Biodata and Sociodemographic Data

The biodata and sociodemographic profile form was a brief questionnaire designed to obtain information from the patient, including variables such as name, age, and educational level.

AVFSFI

Sexual function was assessed by using the Arabic version of the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) [11]. The 19-item FSFI is a measure used to assess the sexual function domains of desire, arousal, lubrication, pain associated with vaginal penetration, satisfaction, and orgasm. The total scores are summed; higher scores indicate more positive sexual function (e.g., higher scores on the pain subscale indicate no or little pain) [11].

AVFGSIS

The AVFGSIS is the short version of the FGSIS translated into the Arabic language. To our knowledge, the short version of the FGSIS [8] is the only published and validated self-rated instrument for measuring female genital self-image.

DSM-IV

The DSM-IV is a widely used manual for diagnosing mental illnesses and is published by the American Psychiatric Association. This was used to exclude other psychiatric illnesses.

Translation and Face and Content Validity

The 4-item AVFGSIS assesses women's feelings and beliefs about their own genitals using a four-point response scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). The FGSIS

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