VALIDATION OF THE APATHY SCALE FOR INSTITUTIONALIZED DEMENTIA PATIENTS: THE APADEM NH SCALE

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Objective: To describe the process of development and first psychometric testing of the APADEM-NH.

Patients and methods: 100 elderly, institutionalized patients (90% female) with diagnosis of probable Alzheimer Disease (AD) (57%), possible AD (13%), AD + cerebral vascular disease (17%), Lewy bodies Dementia (11%) and Parkinson associated to dementia (2%), covering all stages of the disease according to the Global Deterioration Scale (GDS) and Clinical Dementia Rating (CDR). Assessments: Apathy Inventory (AI), Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI), Cornell scale for depression, and the tested scale APADEM-NH. Re-test was carried out in 50 patients and inter-rater reliability was explored also in 50 patients. The following attributes were analyzed: feasibility and acceptability, reliability, validity, and measurement precision.

Results: The APADEM-NH final version consists of 27 items. Mean application time 9.56 minutes. 74% of applications were fully computable. All subscales showed floor and ceiling effect lower than 15%. Internal consistency for each dimension was: Cronbach’s α DT= 0.88, α EB=0.83, α CI= 0.88; item-total correlations >0.45; and item homogeneity coefficients 0.36-0.51. Test-retest reliability for the items was $k_w=0.48-0.92$; for the subscales, ICC=0.79-0.92; and for the total score, ICC=0.93. Inter-rater reliability reached $k_w$ values 0.84-1.00; subscales ICC, 0.95-0.99, and total score ICC, 0.99. The APADEM total score showed a low/moderate correlation with apathy scales (Spearman $\rho$, AI=0.33; NPI-Apathy= 0.31), no correlation with depression scales (NPI-Dementia= -0.003; Cornell= 0.10), and high internal validity ($\rho=0.69 - 0.80$).

Conclusions: APADEM-NH is a feasible, reliable, and valid scale to assess apathy and discerning apathy from depression in patients with dementia.