The Arabic version of the modified dental anxiety scale Psychometrics and normative data for 15-16 year olds

Suha B. Abu-Ghazaleh, MDentSci, FDSRCS (Edin), Lamis D. Rajab, MSc, PhD, Hawazen N. Sonbol, MClInDent, PhD, Ahmad K. Aljafari, BDS, Rawan F. Elkarmi, BDS, MFDS, Gerry Humphris, MClInPsychol, PhD.

Objectives: To prepare an Arabic version of the Modified Dental Anxiety Scale (MDAS) and provide normative information including evidence to support the validity of the measure.

Methods: The MDAS was translated into Arabic and back-translated into English. Data collection took place in Amman, Jordan from March 2009 to March 2010. One thousand and six hundred two 10th grade students took part in the study (15-16 years of age) sampled from 32 schools. Questionnaire consisted not only of the MDAS, but also (i) a single global question on dental anxiety to test concurrent validity, (ii) a question on helplessness in the dental surgery to test construct validity and (iii) demographic profile.

Results: The level of missing data was minimal for the translated scale. The internal consistency for this sample using the Arabic MDAS was 0.87 (95% confidence interval was 0.86-0.88). The measure was a onedimensionalscale. The proportion of the sample that was highly dentally anxious was 22% (≥19 cut-off score).

Expected differences between gender and self-reported dental attendance were observed. There were clear significant relationships as predicted between the Arabic MDAS and (i) a single item measure of dental anxiety and (ii) feeling helpless in the dental chair on a previous occasion.

Conclusion: The Arabic version of the MDAS can be employed for brief assessment of dental anxiety.