Adaptation and Validation of the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale in Sinhala

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental, emotional and behavioral problems to occur during childhood and adolescence. The early recognition of emotional problems in children is essential for better developmental and treatment outcomes. Self-report measures can be valuable components of a comprehensive assessment of anxiety in children. The rationale behind this study was to compare the incidence of anxiety symptoms and their relationship with gender and age in children in Sri Lanka using the Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (SCAS). SCAS is a self-report measure that was designed to evaluate symptoms relating to panic-agoraphobia, separation anxiety, social phobia, obsessive compulsive disorder, physical injury fears and generalized anxiety/ overanxious disorder. The reliability and validity of the SCAS were examined with 480 children and adolescents aged 08 to 16 years and it demonstrated to have high internal consistency (alpha = 0.86). Results of the internal consistency for the subscales indicated an alpha range from 0.51 to 0. 71 and the correlation analyses indicated that each of the subscales was correlated, ranging from a weak correlation of 0.24 between the obsessive compulsive disorder and physical injury fears subscales to a moderate correlation of 0.55 between the social phobia and generalized anxiety disorder/over anxious disorder subscales. Findings also show that the girls displayed significantly higher levels of anxiety symptoms than boys. The usefulness of the SCAS as a screening tool for anxiety symptoms in children is also briefly discussed.