(P18) PSYCHOMETRIC EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE RELATED TO BOWEL MANAGEMENT IN PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
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Background: Bowel dysfunction is a health problem that affects the quality of life (QOL) of people with multiple sclerosis (MS). Existing QOL measures specific to MS disease contain little or no assessment of bowel dysfunction. Objectives: This study determined the reliability and validity of the Quality of Life Scale Related to Bowel Management, originally designed for spinal cord–injured patients, with a sample of 502 MS patients, as many bowel symptoms are similar in both conditions. Methods: A random sample of 700 MS patients with a history of elimination problems was anonymously recruited through the North American Research Committee on Multiple Sclerosis (NARCOMS) patient registry. Data analysis employed Cronbach reliability testing, factor analysis, analysis of variance, and independent t tests to determine scale reliability and validity. Results: Factor analysis of the 11-item scale resulted in two factors: Management and Relationships. Construct validity was demonstrated as the total QOL Bowel Management Tool, and factored subscale scores differed significantly according to a) type of bowel dysfunction (constipation, fecal incontinence, both constipation and fecal incontinence); b) disability level (minimal, moderate, severe); and c) disease classification (relapsing-remitting, progressive) (all P < .001). Internal consistency reliability coefficients for total scale and subscales were 0.91, 0.86, and 0.83, respectively. Conclusions: The Quality of Life Scale Related to Bowel Management demonstrates satisfactory reliability and validity and can be used with MS patients to provide information on their current bowel status and its impact on their QOL.

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