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Measuring patients’ perceptions of back pain: Reliability of the Patient Enablement Instrument for Back Pain

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Introduction

Guidelines for the management of low back pain (LBP) endorse interventions that support interventions aiming to enable patients to better self-manage their condition. Unfortunately, there are currently no reliable ways of measuring the concept enablement in relation to back pain.

Based on the Patient Enablement Instrument¹-², we created the Patient Enablement Instrument for Back Pain.

The objective of this study was to establish the internal consistency, test-retest reliability, measurement error and smallest detectable change of the Patient Enablement Instrument for Back Pain (PEI-BP).

Methods

Adults consulting for persistent non-specific LBP in physiotherapy or chiropractic clinics were included, if the

- LBP had impacted their activities of daily living for more than 1 month
- patients had consulted for treatment at least 3 times within the past 2 years
- patients had no pain below the knee
- patients could speak and understand Danish

The questionnaire was completed twice with 3-5 days in between.

Statistics:

Results

In total, 37 adult patients with non-specific LBP were included, who had complete responses on the PEI-BP and no significant change in pain between baseline and follow-up.

Internal consistency was good (Cronbach’s α = 0.92)

Test-retest reliability and measurement error were acceptable:

- ICCagreement = 0.74
- systematic error = -2.9
- limits of agreement = -12.9 and 7.2
- smallest detectable change: 10.05

Conclusions

The newly developed PEI-BP was found to have acceptable internal consistency, measurement error and test-retest realismlity. Thus, it can be considered a reliable tool to monitor enablement in people presenting with persistent non-specific back pain.

Further studies into the validity of the tool are ongoing.