The Parenting Concerns Questionnaire: A validation study with Portuguese parents with cancer

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INTRODUCTION

When a parent receives the diagnosis of cancer, he/she starts to have specific concerns about his/her minor children [1-4]. Although some studies start to focus on parenting concerns of parents with cancer, instruments assessing the worries of these parents are not common.

This study assesses the **psychometric properties of the Parenting Concerns Questionnaire (PCQ)** in a sample of **Portuguese parents with cancer**.

METHOD

Participants:

- At this moment, 89 participants (84 women and 5 men) answered the questionnaire but for the validation study, it is needed **at least 200 participants** [5].
- Age: $M = 43.89$, $SD = 6.96$ (ranged: 30–71).
- Education: 2 attended middle school, 9 high school, and 7 had a bachelor's degree or were college graduates.
- Marital status: 70 married or cohabitating with their partners, 12 divorced, 5 single, and 2 widows.
- Occupation: 52 employed, 11 unemployed, 3 retired, and 23 on sick leave.
- Number of children: 35 participants had one child, 47 had two children, 5 had three children, and 2 had four children.

Inclusion criteria:

- Adults (males and females) with at least 25 years old;
- Having a diagnosis of cancer;
- Be a parent of at least one minor child;
- Be able to understand and complete a questionnaire in Portuguese.

Exclusion criteria:

- Being diagnosed with cancer for more than 5 years

Data Analysis:

- Confirmatory Factor Analysis;
- Pearson correlation analyses - convergent and concurrent validity.
- Cronbach alpha - test reliability.

Ethical Procedures:

- Approved – Ethical Committee of the FPCEUP;
- Only participants who consented their participation were allowed to proceed and answer the protocol.

Measures:

Parenting Concerns Questionnaire

- 15 items;
- 3 factors related with parenting concerns in parents with cancer;
- Cronbach's α : .79 - .85

EUROHIS-QOL-8

- 8 items
- Assess quality of life
- PT version: Cronbach's α range between .79 and .83

Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale

- 14 items;
- Assess anxiety and depression symptoms;
- PT version: Cronbach's α range between .76 and .81

Parenting Sense of Competence

- 16 items
- Assess parenting sense of competence
- PT version: Cronbach's α range between .75 and .79

Parenting Stress Scale

- 18 items;
- Assess parenting stress and satisfaction
- PT version: Cronbach's α range between .77 and .80

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for PCQ 15 Items presented in Muriel and colleagues (2012)

Factor/Variable	Mean	SD	N	Factor Loadings		
				1	2	3
Factor 1: Practical impact of illness on child						
My own mood, worries or emotions are affecting my children	2.92	1.08	192	0.64	0.08	0.03
My physical limits or low energy are affecting my children	2.88	1.19	193	0.53	0.00	0.29
I am not able to spend as much time with my children as I'd like	2.86	1.41	190	0.72	0.16	-0.09
My illness is changing my children's routine	2.34	1.21	190	0.65	0.17	0.19
Changes in my memory or attention are affecting my children	2.16	1.13	188	0.63	0.27	0.14
Factor 2: Emotional impact of illness on child						
My children are emotionally upset by my illness	3.12	1.18	190	0.33	0.65	-0.09
My children are worried that I am going to die	2.63	1.33	185	0.20	0.55	0.07
My children get upset when we talk about the illness	2.12	1.07	187	0.12	0.55	0.17
My children might be in need of professional mental health care	2.10	1.11	188	0.05	0.78	0.11
My children get confused or upset by what others say about my illness	1.86	0.93	183	0.13	0.47	0.15
Factor 3: Concerns about coparent						
My children's other parent would not be able to meet their emotional needs if I die	2.45	1.40	183	0.15	0.15	0.70
There is no one to take good care of my children if I die	1.89	1.21	190	0.01	0.15	0.60
My partner is not providing me with enough practical support	1.88	1.23	178	-0.03	0.19	0.53
My partner is not providing me with enough emotional support	1.83	1.24	173	-0.14	0.19	0.62
My children's other parent would not be a responsible caregiver if I die	1.72	1.25	185	0.14	0.01	0.67

CONSIDERATIONS & CONCLUSION:

Exploring parenting concerns provides additional relevant information about the experiences and psychological distress of parents with cancer. The PCQ can be an important tool for identifying parents with cancer who might benefit from additional support in parenting by psychological intervention. To our knowledge, this study is a first comprehensive approach to measuring parenting concerns among Portuguese parents with cancer. Parents with diagnosis of cancer are very much concerned about the impact that cancer causes on children, how to communicate the diagnosis and deal with children's negative emotions and reactions [3]. These circumstances can adversely affect both their psychological well-being, and sense of competent mothering [3]. In women with breast cancer, their concerns regarding children were seemingly associated with the demands of their maternal role and with social conceptions about parenting that emphasized the greater importance of their children's needs regardless of the physical and emotional implications of their own BC [3]. So, it is important to have scales, like PCQ, that analyze parenting concerns in parents with cancer, in order to develop intervention for these parents.

References:

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