

# An approach to developing a culturally appropriate research tool for migrant women

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**Introduction.** In recent years, there has been a shift in health policy toward focusing on the inequalities in health and managing diversity (Papadopoulos & Lees, 2001). This shift has also highlighted an increase in health and psychological needs of ethnic minorities. In response to these needs, a powerful guidance comes from the culturally competent research on the assessment of problems, needs, and resources of ethnic minorities. One of the main challenges in conducting research with ethnic minorities is constructing and using culturally appropriate research instruments. In general, there are particular biases that may affect the validity of the adapted/developed instrument for another cultural group (Van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996). Qualitative methods are particularly useful in assessing the cultural competence or content validity of the translated or developed instruments. Focus group discussion is one of the most efficient ways to be used in questionnaire evaluation process due to its strengths in creating interactions among participants, making people feel free to disclose, fostering communication, giving all people a chance to speak, and involving a balance between letting people express themselves and keeping the conversation focused (Fowler, 1995; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Ruppenthal, Tuck, & Gagnon, 2005). The purpose of the groups in this study was to ensure cultural validation of the survey questionnaire by taking into account migrant women's experiences and views. The survey is a part of project that explores adaptation experiences of Turkish-speaking migrant women living in London, where the largest Turkish-speaking community resides, in terms of their acculturation strategies, social support, empowerment and psychological well-being.

**Method.** This cultural validation procedure included a homogenous focus group design. Sample included 8 women, 26 to 46 years old. All women had been in the UK for many years, ranging from 3 to 14 years.

**Piloting the questionnaire.** For the purposes of the survey, a questionnaire was developed which included a demographic part and items measuring social support, general health, empowerment, life satisfaction, and acculturation attitudes. The researchers employed a combination of items from pre-existing scales and items developed for the needs of the survey. The tool was piloted with 11 women, 7 of whom were bilinguals. These women were invited in a focus group meeting. The focus group was conducted entirely in Turkish by a bilingual facilitator and lasted for approximately two hours. One focus group ( $n=4$ ), carried out in Canterbury, was composed of highly educated bilingual women having university degrees, and the other ( $n=4$ ), carried out in London, was composed of low to moderately educated women.

**Findings.** The findings of the focus groups suggested the content of the questionnaire was comprehensive and relevant to the Turkish-speaking migrant women. However, one standard scale was excluded because both group commented about the complexity of the scale. The format of another scale was changed because most of the participants stated difficulty regarding its format. In the demographic part, some open-ended questions were rephrased. The size of each group was good enough to reveal detailed accounts for each participant and to get diverse experiences and ideas. Due to homogenous groups, similarity in their background helped participants to speak openly. Also, the pilot study confirmed that the focus of the survey areas was appropriate as it revealed that main concerns of Turkish-speaking women living in the UK were culture clashes, feelings of isolation, lack of culture-specific activities and poor social networks.

**Conclusion.** Developing a culturally appropriate research instrument is an integral part of the culturally competent and valid research with ethnic minorities. Culturally appropriate research instruments require that utilized instruments should be culturally competent, and linguistically appropriate for the target population. Focus group discussions helped to incorporate women's knowledge and experiences to improve research tools and procedures, and consequently reach a greater cultural sensitivity by producing a number of important suggestions in the questionnaire presentation style and content, which the researchers adopted.

## References

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