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Advancing Equity in Pain Management: The Arabic Validation of the APS-POQ-R

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Effective postoperative pain management begins with accurate assessment. Yet, despite pain being widely recognized as the "fifth vital sign," significant disparities persist in how it is measured and managed across linguistic and cultural contexts.[1] The recent translation and validation of the American Pain Society Patient Outcome Questionnaire-Revised (APS-POQ-R) into Arabic marks an important advancement in addressing these gaps for Arabic-speaking patients.

The APS-POQ-R is a well-established tool designed to evaluate multiple dimensions of pain—severity, relief, emotional impact, interference with function and sleep, and patient participation in care.[2] Until now, the lack of a validated Arabic version limited its use across 22 Arabic-speaking countries, hindering both clinical quality assessment and cross-cultural research.[3]

The study reported in this issue of the Journal of the Best Available Evidence in Medicine employed a methodologically rigorous process in translating and validating the instrument.[4] Following international guidelines, the team conducted forward and backward translation, expert panel reconciliation, pilot cognitive testing, and psychometric evaluation with 150 postoperative patients in Libya. The Arabic APS-POQ-R demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's α = 0.90), mirroring the reliability of the original English version.[1,3] Participants confirmed that the instrument was clear, culturally relevant, and easy to understand.

Beyond linguistic validation, this achievement has significant clinical implications. Reliable pain outcome measurement enables healthcare providers to identify inadequacies in pain control, tailor interventions, and engage patients in shared decision-making.[3,4] Importantly, data from the study revealed that over half of the participants continued to experience moderate-to-severe pain 24 hours post-surgery—a reminder that effective assessment is only the first step toward better management.[3-5]

The availability of a validated Arabic APS-POQ-R provides clinicians and researchers with a standardized, culturally appropriate tool for evaluating pain outcomes.[1,3] Its use can enhance quality improvement programs, support benchmarking across hospitals, and expand inclusion of Arabic-speaking patients in global pain research.[4,5]

Future work should explore adaptation across regional dialects, assess responsiveness to clinical change, and integrate the questionnaire into digital health systems. Such initiatives will help translate validated measurement into tangible improvements in patient care.

The Arabic validation of the APS-POQ-R represents more than a linguistic milestone—it is a step toward equitable, evidence-based pain management for millions of Arabic-speaking patients. By combining methodological rigor with cultural sensitivity, this work strengthens the foundation for better pain assessment, research collaboration, and ultimately, better outcomes for patients recovering from surgery.

Disclosure Statement

The author has no conflicts of interests to declare.

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