

Abstract

Background: Patients with mental illness suffer from stigmatization in the society. Self-stigma is an internalized stigma. It affects the clinical outcome of patients with mental disorder. There have been few studies that focus on self-stigma phenomenon in patients with depression. It is believed that identification and management of self-stigma may improve the outcome in these patients. However there is a lack of instruments to be used to measure the degree of self-stigma in patients with depression in Hong Kong.

Objectives: This study aimed to validate the Chinese version of the Self-stigma of Depression Scale (C-SSDS) for use in Hong Kong. This study also aimed to identify the factors that may predict self-stigma and its association with quality of life.

Methods: The Self-Stigma of Depression Scale (SSDS) was translated into Chinese version and reviewed by an expert panel. Patients with depression were recruited from a local psychiatric outpatient clinic. A total of 150 patients were included in the study. The C-SSDS was administered for measuring self-stigma. The Chinese version of Self-Stigma of Mental Illness Scale (CSSMIS), the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSE), the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), Beck depression Inventory (BDI) and the interview version of Hong Kong Chinese World Health Organization Quality of Life instrument Brief version (WHOQOL-BREF(HK)-interview version) were also administered. The validity and reliability of the C-SSDS were examined. The association of self-stigma and quality of life with socio-demographic and clinical characteristics were also examined.

Results: The content validity of the C-SSDS satisfied the expert panel. Concurrent validity was shown by a moderate correlation ($r=0.61$, $p<0.01$) with the Self-

concurrency subscale of CSSMIS. Convergent validity was significant with a moderately high correlation strength of the C-SSDS with RSE, GSES and BDI. The C-SSDS has a high internal consistency ($\alpha=0.874$) and satisfactory test-retest reliability ($r=0.824$). The factor structure of the C-SSDS was found to be different from the original SSDS. More severe depression, lower self-esteem and higher level of stigma agreement were found to be associated with higher self-stigma. Higher self-stigma was found to be associated with poorer quality of life.

Conclusions: The C-SSDS is a valid and reliable instrument in measuring self-stigma in patients with diagnosis of depression. It is simple and could be useful in clinical setting to identify patients with high level of self-stigma who may benefit from interventions. Further studies to examine the factor structure and longitudinal studies to examine for causal relationship between self-stigma and other factors were recommended.

Keywords: self-stigma, depression, Self-Stigma of Depression Scale