

GEMCIAC

Guidelines for cross-cultural adaptation of the instrument from English to other languages

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The aim of translation is to produce different language versions of the original GEMCIAC questionnaire (UK English version) that are as close as possible to the meaning of the original English version to allow generalization of the findings. Most importantly, the translation process should ensure item equivalence, i.e. the semantic equivalence of each item (emotion or feeling word) across languages, both with respect to the denotative meaning and potential connotations perceived in the language community. In addition, the translation should be culturally appropriate and easily understandable by large segments of the target population. The original GEMCIAC English version should be always used as the standard from which all other translations are made. Using existing translations to different languages carries a great risk of deviating from the validated version. The following standard process should be rigorously adhered to:

Phase 1: Forward translation (from English to another language)

If at all possible, two translators should undertake translation in parallel and without consulting each other. The translators should be bilingual, have excellent knowledge of colloquially spoken English- but their primary language should be that of the target culture.

The standard process should begin with a detailed review of the GEMCIAC checklists (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) so that the translators are familiar with the instrument. There are two checklist: one for intensity ratings and another for frequency ratings. Each of the checklists consists of four components to be translated: the instructions (only one word differs between the two checklists), the main question (again, only one word differs between the two checklists), the rating scale labels (different in each checklist) and the GEMCIAC terms (the same for both checklists).

Consider the following in the translation process:

- aim for maximal conceptual and connotative equivalence of a word or phrase rather than a literal, word-by-word () translation. Not all English words are easily translatable into other languages. In such cases the underlying concept and the connotations for the English word should be reflected in the translations rather than corresponding to straightforward dictionary translations. The use of a thesaurus may help to find the optimal choice
- be clear and concise. Fewer words are better. Long sentences with many clauses should be avoided.
- use natural and acceptable language for the broadest audience.

Phase 2: Consensus meeting

During the consensus meeting for parallel translations, the translators discuss the translation of the instrument, reviewing all the versions and agreeing on the optimal version. Any disagreements

over text or item translations that cannot be resolved must be documented for discussion in the reconciliation meeting. If only one highly competent bilingual translator can be used for practical reasons, the translated version should be carefully checked with competent researchers.

Phase 3: Reconciliation meeting (review of forward translations)

Once all the independent forward translations are prepared, the translators meet with the person responsible for making final decisions about the instrument translation (the adjudicator). The purpose of the meeting is to reconcile any disagreements among the translators, confirm translation equivalence with the original instrument, and reach agreement on the most appropriate wording for the final version.

Phase 4: Backward translation into English

Backward translation, which are required for the professional adaptation of an instrument from another language, involves translating the GEMIAC checklists back into the original language (UK English) for the purpose of comparing/contrasting the back translation with the original questionnaire. Using the same process as outlined in Phase 1, the GEMIAC should be translated back to English by one independent translator. The translator should be a native English speaker but also proficient in the target language (and ideally live in the target country) as it is important for the translator to understand the cultural context but not have prior knowledge of the GEMIAC. As in the initial translation, emphasis in the back-translation should be on conceptual and cultural equivalence rather than linguistic equivalence.

Phase 5: Review of the backward translation into English

The original GEMIAC checklists and backward translations should be reviewed for consistency. Any discrepancies should be discussed and resolved with the main developer and bilingual translators who undertook the forward translation (i.e. problematic words or phrases that do not completely capture the concept addressed by the original item). The goal here is to determine whether equivalent versions across languages and cultures have been created and confirm that satisfactory procedures were followed. If equivalent versions have not been created, additional forward translations should be iterated as many times as necessary to achieve a satisfactory translated version.