

Psychometrics of the PHCS in Vulnerable at Risk Populations

Purpose:

The purpose of this research is cross cultural evaluation of the Perceived Health Competence Scale (PHCS) in minority populations at risk for poor health outcomes.

Theory/Conceptual Framework:

The Behavioral Model for Vulnerable Populations guides evaluation of relationships among health behaviors and outcomes measured with the PHCS and the variables of access to health services and health status.

The PHCS measures health management beliefs about performing health behaviors and achieving health outcomes; it has shown good predictive ability about future health behaviors. Those who are older and those in poorer health feel less competent about health management. Those who score low more often use maladaptive coping mechanisms, suffer from depression, and feel their health is poorer. Those who score high more often participate in health promoting behaviors, score higher in quality of life measures, and feel more in control of their health.

Subjects:

Two separate sampling sites were used. One of community dwelling elderly African Americans (mean age 75) and one of reservation dwelling American Indian/Native Americans (mean age 44) in the Midwest.

Methods:

All participants completed the PHCS and Perceived Health Status Scale (PHSS).

Results:

Factor analysis reveals a two factor scale within the eight item PHCS separating competency beliefs about behaviors and outcomes as two distinct constructs in both samples. Both samples scores were good. In the elderly AA sample, there is a positive correlation between competency beliefs about behaviors and ability to access health care services; additionally, women score higher in competency beliefs about health outcomes.

Conclusions:

The PHCS shows promise as a measure to evaluate health management especially in chronic health conditions. Health competence based upon self-efficacy beliefs is amenable to nursing therapeutics, coaching, and educational programs. The PHCS enhances communication so that the most appropriate resources may be utilized in the provision of health services.