

Evaluation of sexual function in women who suffer from dyspareunia: Translation and validation of the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) to Hebrew

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Abstract

Background: Sexual function has an impact on women's quality of life. Female sexual dysfunction is common, and may manifest as vulvar pain and impairment of sexual desire, vaginal lubrication, or orgasm. Functional questionnaires are used to evaluate sexual dysfunction severity for clinical and research purposes. The Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) is a useful and well-established questionnaire. Yet, despite frequent use in Israeli studies, the questionnaire has not been validated in Hebrew.

Aims and uniqueness: 1) To translate and validate the FSFI to Hebrew for use in clinical and research frameworks in Israel, 2) to assess associations between FSFI scores and data from a one-week pain diary among women who suffer from sexual pain.

Methods: Ninety-one women who complained of dyspareunia or other sexual dysfunctions were recruited from the Women's Health Center of the Clalit Health Services, in addition to 96 healthy controls. The research group participants completed the FSFI and a one-week pain diary in which they documented the frequency of their sexual intercourse and rated the pain intensity experienced. Healthy controls completed the FSFI. The questionnaire was back translated and was tested for face validity.

Results: We found high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.97$) and test-retest reliability (Interclass Correlation Coefficient; ICC=0.86). The translated questionnaire had good discriminant validity and excellent sensitivity and specificity (92% and 90%, respectively). The cut-off score (26.5) was identical to the original questionnaire. We also found moderate correlations between the FSFI scores, frequency of sexual intercourse and pain intensity, as reported in the pain diary.

Conclusion: The Hebrew version of FSFI has good psychometric properties and is appropriate for clinical and research use among Hebrew speakers. Its scores reflect the quality of sexual function, the impaired domains of sexual function, and the associations between pain intensity and frequency of sexual intercourse.

Keywords: female sexual function, dyspareunia, Female Sexual Function Questionnaire (FSFI), validation, Hebrew translation