INTRODUCTION

In mild Alzheimer’s disease (AD), loss of control, with the patient is a significant consequence for the patient (relative), and may be amenable to improvement with effective intervention.

Clinicians do not currently have a brief, reliable measure to assess directly the clinical status of patients diagnosed with, or at risk of, mild Alzheimer’s disease, nor do they have a comprehensive tool to structure their discussions with patients to monitor meaningful changes in patient status.

An instrument that measures routine shared activities may serve as a simplified proxy for measuring the patient’s clinical status.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study was to develop and validate a questionnaire to assess the patient-partner shared activities that would be useful in evaluating the effects of interventions in clinical trials of mild AD.

METHODS

The Inner-Patient Questionnaire for Shared Activities (PPQSA) assessed the importance of 17 shared activities and the extent to which the patient’s mood or mental state interfered with the activity.

The Work Productivity and Activity Impairment Questionnaire-Dyad Version (WPAI-DYAD) is a 24-item questionnaire that measures work and activity impairment due to a specific health condition.

The Caregiver Reaction Assessment (CRA) is a 24-item questionnaire that measures the overall impact of the caregiver on daily functioning.

RESULTS

Feasibility of using the PPQSA

While the PPQSA is easy to administer and was completed by all patients (n=37), patients and partners (n=100) were 27% to 34% missing data for items.

Concurrent validity

The PPQSA score correlated with the TSC score (r = 0.92 for spouses, r = 0.96 for non-spouses; Figure 1), and indicated that a single measure of shared activities could be used to predict the TSC score. The correlation coefficient for PPQSA item scores was 0.92 for spouses and 0.90 for non-spouses.

Statistical analysis

A p-value <0.05 was required for significance using two-sided hypothesis tests; no p-value was associated with the analysis.

Factor analysis (confirmatory)

The results of the factor analysis of the PPQSA scores indicated that the results were significantly different for non-spouses compared to spouses.

Factor analysis (secondary analysis)

The results of the factor analysis of the PPQSA scores indicated that the results were significantly different for non-spouses compared to spouses.

DISCUSSION

The PPQSA appeared to be a reliable measure of routine activities performed by patients with Alzheimer’s disease and their partners. Replication of this study may produce results that confirm or allow further refinement of items in the scale.

Although neither the MMSE score nor the patients degree of depression were significantly related to the PPQSA scores, the time spent caring and other measures of caregiver burden were significantly related. The PPQSA may be, at the very least, a good proxy measure of care giver efforts. Additional psychometric properties testing including retest reliability of the questionnaire, the PPQSA in clinical intervention trials appear warranted.

An analysis plan for testing the PPQSA as a proxy measure of overall clinical status by investigators should also be considered.

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DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF A NEW OUTCOME MEASURE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATIENTS WITH ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE AND THEIR PARTNERS

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