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Validation of a New Attribution Style Inventory for Chinese Patients with Schizophrenia

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Introduction: Emerging research evidence suggested that attributional style is one of the main predictors of schizophrenia symptoms.

Objectives: This study aimed to develop and validate Attribution Questionnaire on Symptom for Schizophrenia (AQSS) in response to the deficiencies in current scales.

Methods: The AQSS was developed based on subscales relating to several psychopathological domains included in diagnostic categories in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV version. The test items were checked by experienced clinicians for face validity and were tested through a pilot study. The final questionnaire included nine events reflecting four dimensions in each: controllability, internality, stability and globality. Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) was used to assess the concurrent validity of the AQSS.

Results: A four factor structure was extracted from the data using exploratory factor analysis: controllability, internality, stability and globality. Internal consistency of Cronbach's alphas ranges from 0.84, 0.89, 0.90 and 0.91 respectively, with a total Cronbach's alpha level is 0.92. The test-retest reliability ranged from 0.72 to 0.82. Three dimensions of AQSS (i.e.internality, stability and globality) significantly correlated with the same dimensions of the Attribution Style Questionnaire, with correlation coefficients of 0.33, 0.65 and 0.61 for internality, stability and globality respectively. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the excellent level of model fit in the four factor structure.

Conclusion: The AQSS has high level of reliability and validity. It is a satisfactory instrument to assess attributional style in patients with schizophrenia.