School of Psychology

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Postmission Altruistic Identity Disruption Questionnaire

(PostAID-Q): Validity of a Measure of Responses Following Humanitarian Aid Work

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Abstract

Aim

Humanitarian aid personnel are increasingly at risk of being exposed to primary and vicarious trauma due to the inherent risks associated with humanitarian work and the increasing politicization of humanitarian aid (Curtis, 2009; McCormack, Joseph, & Hagger, 2009; McFarlane, 2004). There is a need for the humanitarian field to develop an academic discipline that focuses on producing scientifically valid theories and procedures in the selection, training, and postmission support of aid personnel (McCall & Salama, 1999; Musa & Hamid, 2008). Furthermore, there is a need for a sensitive instrument for determining personnel’s vulnerability to traumatic stress.

The PostAID-Q is an 18-item self-report questionnaire designed to measure Altruistic Identity Disruption (AID). AID is a type of psychosocial distress that leads to feelings of isolation and invalidation, which results in reintegration difficulties and increased risk of psychological morbidity. The aim of this study was to establish the psychometric properties of the Postmission Altruistic Identity Disruption Questionnaire (PostAID-Q), in particular, the construct validity, incremental validity, and internal consistency reliability.

Method

Participants were recruited from the DEVEX (www.devex.com) and by word of mouth from the researchers humanitarian aid contacts. A total of 60 participants completed an online survey of 99 questions, comprising six questionnaires: the PostAID-Q, the 12-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12), the Revised Impact of Event Scale (IES-R), the Short Depression Happiness Scale (SDHS), the Changes in Outlook Questionnaire (CIOQ), and the Social Provisions Scale (SPS).
To determine construct validity, scores on the PostAID-Q were compared to scores on the 12-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12), the Revised Impact of Event Scale (IES-R), the Social Provisions Scale (SPS), the short-form Changes in Outlook Questionnaire (CIOQ), and the Short Depression Happiness Scale (SDHS) using bivariate correlations. Incremental Validity was examined using two hierarchical regression analyses. The dependent variable for the first regression was the IES-R and the independent variables were the GHQ-12 for the first step and the PostAID-Q for the second step. In the second hierarchical regression the dependent variable was the SPS. The independent variables were the same as the first regression. Internal Consistency Reliability was determined by examining the Cronbach’s alpha of the PostAID-Q.

**Results**

The current research replicated previous internal consistency findings for the GHQ-12, IES-R, SPS, and SDHS. The PostAID-Q demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity and thus construct validity. It also provided incremental validity compared to the GHQ-12 and strong internal consistency reliability (α = .82). The intrusion factor of the IES-R and the social integration factor of the SPS each uniquely measured 17% of PostAID/Q variance. This means that 34% of PostAID/Q variance is accounted for by intrusion and difficulties with social integration.

**Conclusion**

The PostAID-Q promises to be a useful self-report measure in the postmission care of humanitarian aid personnel and postmission/pre-deployment processes of humanitarian aid organizations. It is able to measure psychosocial distress in humanitarian aid personnel during reintegration. Further research should focus on replicating the validity results and establishing the reliability of the PostAID-Q.
Because the PostAID/Q can measure intrusive thoughts and social integration problems in international workers, future research should also determine the validity of its use with military personnel.