

## VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCALE OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT (MSPSS) IN CANCER PATIENTS

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Social support (SS) is considered an important component in cancer patients' quality of life. The measurement and evaluation of SS in cancer patients is not well understood in the Sri Lankan context. This study examined the Sinhala version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) for its psychometric properties. The scale has 3 dimensions; family (FA), friends (FR), and significant others (SO) support. The research was approved by the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, Galle. A total of 40 cancer patients at the Radiotherapy unit, Oncology ward, Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya in Southern, Sri Lanka were enrolled on 'first come-first serve' basis using their appointment register in 2013. Participants were asked to complete three scales; the MSPSS, the Centre for Epidemiological Studies – Depression scale (CES-D) and the World Health Organization-Quality of Life-

Brief scale (WHOQOL-BREF). In addition, their socio-demographic data were recorded. To test-retest reliability of the scale, the same group of participants were asked to fill the same scales two weeks later. Results were regarded as statistically significant if  $p < 0.05$ . Mean ( $\pm$ SD) age of the sample was 61( $\pm$ 12) years. Mean score ( $\pm$ SD) for overall SS was 65( $\pm$ 7). The Sinhala-MSPSS was found to have a negative correlation with the CES-D (divergent validity), but was positively correlated with the WHOQOL-BREF (convergent validity). The internal consistency of the overall scale was good (Cronbach's alpha - 0.75). FA and SO showed high Cronbach's alpha (0.983 and 0.996). The test-retest reliability was found to be 0.86. The study concludes that the Sinhala version of MSPSS is a valid and reliable tool to assess SS of cancer patients.

**Keywords:** Social Support, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Validity -Reliability