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Letter to the Editor of *PAIN*

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**Lost in Translation: A Cautionary Note About Presentation of Non-English Measures  
in English Language Journals**

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**Lost in Translation: A Cautionary Note About Presentation of Non-English Measures  
in English Language Journals**

The recent publication of a new French language behavioral pain scale for use with children by Fournier-Charrière and colleagues [3] brings to light an important issue related to the presentation of measures and questionnaires developed in one language and subsequently translated to English for publication purposes.

The paper by Fournier-Charrière and colleagues [3] presents in Appendix A an English version of their 5 item behaviorally based measure to be used by nurses or researchers to score children's pain. The items were chosen based on a review of the literature and were developed in French by a group of French pediatric pain experts. The paper presents a systematic validation of this French behavioral measure and we applaud the authors on making their measure available in the article. While the authors report using a back translation process to translate items from French to English for presentation in the article, the availability of this measure in English in Appendix A may lead readers to infer that the measure has undergone validation testing in English when this is simply not the case.

We have encountered numerous articles published in English language journals, such as *Pain*, where measures developed in other languages are presented in some form (e.g., table, appendix) with items listed in English without validation. Many of these papers report little to no information regarding how items were translated for the paper. Moreover, it is only upon very careful scrutiny of the paper that it becomes clear that the measure was not developed, administered, or tested in English. This is of significant concern as researchers and clinicians may use the English version presented in the published article without realizing that it has not

undergone validation testing in that language and, in some cases, may not have even been adequately translated. Research has shown that even minor differences in wording can influence item responses [1,2].

*Pain* is a critical outlet for publication of international pain research. Dissemination of validated measures in different languages is important for advancing the field and we encourage continued work and publication of research in this area. However, we are concerned about the potential for confusion in selection and use of measures. We recommend that when a non-English scale is being presented in an English language journal that: (1) items should be displayed in the original language in which they were developed and administered in the study; (2) items should be accompanied by English translation for comprehension purposes; and (3) a note should be included that clearly indicates the items have been translated purely for presentation in the article and have not been validated in English. Items should be translated using recommended approaches [4], as was done by Fournier-Charrière and colleagues [3], to facilitate further English language work with the measure.

References:

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- [3] Fournier-Charrière E, Tourniaire B, Carbajal R, Cimerman P, Lassaue F, Ricard C, Reiter F, Turquin P, Lombart B, Letierce A, Falissard C. EVENDOL, a new behavioral pain scale for children ages 0 to 7 years in the emergency department: Design and validation. *Pain* 2012;153:1573-82.

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