

Translated or culturally adapted audiology tests and questionnaires: balancing regional and international interests and resources

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The International Journal of Audiology (IJA) is a leading peer review scientific journal that disseminates internationally relevant research in audiology. As a unique periodical title, IJA was born in 2002 from merging three excellent long standing peer review journals: British Journal of Audiology (1967–2001); International Audiology (1962–1970) which became Audiology (1971–2001); and Scandinavian Audiology (1972–2001). Subsequently, IJA has provided generations of authors the opportunity to publish a wide breadth of exceptional-quality manuscripts in globally relevant research. This includes appropriately translated and cross-culturally adapted hearing-related questionnaires and speech audiometry tests. Indeed, the journal has published valuable guidelines on expectations in terms of following a rigorous methodology for adaptations of questionnaires (Hall et al. 2018).

Over the past 20 years, one of the many milestones IJA has experienced pertains to publishing an increasingly substantial number of manuscripts, with an even more intensified number submitted and published since 2020. In the past two years, the number of manuscripts that report on adaptation of existing hearing-related questionnaires and speech audiometry tests have exceeded the total number published from the previous 20 years. Many of these questionnaires and tests have been appropriately and successfully translated or adapted using principles from the original versions for regional linguistic and/or cross-cultural needs. Other manuscripts reporting translations/adaptations could not be assigned for review simply due to limitations in scientific rigour and/or writing in the English language. In addition, there were also many reports on translations/adaptations of tests or questionnaires into languages specific to small geographical areas, which too often has a limited audience of interest across the larger IJA readership community. Ultimately, we are called to balance the interests of our readers as

a whole while maintaining a commitment to the authors of these works and their potential readers.

While IJA aims include publishing “*high-quality papers covering the multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary field of audiology*”, we also recognise our aim “*to improve the science and practice of audiology around the world*”. Therefore, to ensure conservancy of limited published pages while maintaining commitment and addressing the increased need for translated and adapted material submissions, IJA has decided to implement a new approach to submissions reporting on adaptation of existing tests and questionnaires. Reports on translations, cross-cultural adaptations, psychometric validations of existing tests or questionnaires and development of test materials for standard speech audiometry tests in new languages will now be submitted as a brief *Research Letter to the Editor* (e.g., Munro et al. 2020). These brief letters are to be no longer than 1500 words, will be subject to peer-review and must be accompanied by Supplementary material including the translated test procedure or information on where and how it can be obtained. A more comprehensive report or analysis of the data could be stored in accessible online repositories (e.g., Open Science Framework, medRxiv, Figshare) that must be referenced in the Research Letter. We also acknowledge that the number of regional journals has increased substantially in recent years and that in many instances these platforms may be more suitable for papers on test translations or adaptations for specific regions. However, in instances where significant novelty in terms of methods and techniques applied are apparent and have implications for a wider international audience, authors can consider submitting it as a technical report or original submission for consideration by the IJA Editorial Office. It is important that the author/s of such submissions clearly indicate the novel methods or techniques applied to the translation, development or adaptation of a test that would be applicable to the wider international audience.

As per IJA publishing guidelines, all translated or adapted questionnaires should include the checklist provided by Hall et al. (2018) as Supplementary material, along with justifications when any of the specified steps were not followed. If any other internationally acknowledged guideline (e.g., International Test Commission 2017) was chosen to be followed, authors should include relevant details and checklists. All submissions reporting on translation or adaptations of tests or questionnaires should include some background information on the language involved (e.g., number of speakers, geographical size and location, as well as any unique features of the language). Furthermore, when examining the psychometric properties of questionnaires, researchers should consider guidelines such as COSMIN taxonomy of measurement properties (Mokkink et al., 2010) to identify which measurement properties are important to investigate (e.g., content validity, reliability) and develop a clear rationale. They should also use standard terminologies and methodologies, as well as benchmark the submitted work with these guidelines.

As for speech audiometry measures and various language versions of a test, authors should provide relevant detailed information as Supplementary materials. Reference to relevant standards (e.g., ISO 8253-3:2022) and guidelines (e.g., Akeroyd et al. 2015) should be made to ensure the materials meet requirements for precision of measurement. While test-retest reliability is often included as part of the development process, validity especially for evaluation of individuals with hearing loss should be considered.

IJA is confident that these changes provide a platform for collegial dissemination of validated international audiology resources unique to specific regions and languages. Most importantly, this new approach will allow the journal to focus resources on research articles pertaining to

the growing body of leading research efforts that are original or innovative, with widespread international appeal and impact.

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