

REPLICATION AND EXTENSION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTRUMENT MEASURING CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY FOLLOWING STROKE

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Purpose: The purpose of this study was to replicate and extend the findings of a previous study in which a new instrument was developed and tested measuring Continuity/Discontinuity of self following stroke (CDSS).

Method: The conceptual basis for the instrument arose from an existential phenomenological study of stroke survivors. A 45-item instrument with a 3-point response set was developed using standard instrument techniques. The sample size for the initial study was 55, and for the present study 50. A principal components analysis was used in both studies. Data analysis proceeded with the sample size of 50, followed by analysis of the combined samples, for N=105.

Findings: A 2-factor solution in the initial study was replicated with the sample of 50. Cronbach's alpha reliability for factor 1 (Discontinuity) was .847, and for factor 2 (Continuity), .804. As expected, these were attenuated somewhat from those in the initial study. Neither scale had appreciable skewness. When both samples were combined, 3 factors emerged. The 10-item Discontinuity scale remained essentially unchanged. Continuity now appears to be 2 separate factors, one relating to personal accomplishments, personal control, and independence (factor 2), while the other focused on maintenance of relationships, being connected to others, being accepted by other, and communicating with others (factor 3). Cronbach's alpha for the 5 item factor 2=.844; and the 7 item factor 3=.806.

Discussion: The factor analysis of 50 additional cases robustly replicated the 2-factor solution. In addition, a subtle, but real pattern was detected in the "Continuity" dimension. This supports the existential-phenomenological findings in which Continuity of self was found to be experienced through a sense of control, independence and connection with others. From this study, it appears that rather than 3 dimensions for continuity, there are two; control and independence factored out as 1 dimension, and connections with others, a second dimension. Control can be seen as a facet of independence and vice versa. Further testing of the instrument is in progress.