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Factorial Validity of the Arabic Version of the Stress and Anxiety to Viral Epidemics-6 Items (SAVE-6) Scale among the General Population in Lebanon

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the psychometric properties of the Arabic version of the Stress and Anxiety to Viral Epidemics-6 items (SAVE-6) scale for assessing people's anxiety in response to the viral epidemic in Lebanon. The 406 participants responded voluntarily to the online survey that included the SAVE-6, Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7), and Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) tools. The single-structure SAVE-6 model showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.773$). The SAVE-6 scale also showed good convergent validity with the GAD-7 (Spearman's $\rho=0.42$, $P<0.001$) and PHQ-9 ($\rho=0.38$, $P<0.001$). Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) analysis revealed an Arabic SAVE-6 cut-off score of 12 points (area under the curve [AUC] = 0.753; sensitivity = 62.74%; specificity = 78.26%) for an at least mild degree of anxiety (GAD-7 score ≥ 5). The Arabic version of the SAVE-6 was a reliable, valid, and solely usable scale for measuring the anxiety response of the general population to the viral epidemic.

Keywords: COVID-19; SAVE-6; Anxiety; Arabic

The first case of the virus was reported in Lebanon on February 25, 2020. Intensive governmental control at an early stage led to the suppression of virus spread, as the number of cases did not exceed 20 per day until May 2020. However, the economic difficulties forced the government to loosen this lockdown. In year-end vacations, specifically in December 2020, the country opened without any restrictions, which resulted in a sharp increase in the number of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)-positive cases. The government has confirmed 461,062 cases and 6,096 related deaths nationwide as of March 28, 2021, and has allowed limited easing of the lockdown on movement and public services to combat the spread of COVID-19.¹

