

The Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire: A Preliminary Study of Psychometric Properties and Prediction of Functioning in Chronic Pain

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Introduction

- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and the psychological flexibility model on which it is based, is of growing interest in the chronic pain field.
- One part of this model is a therapeutic process called *Cognitive defusion* (CD). CD is a process of experiencing a distinction between thoughts and events.
- *Cognitive fusion* (CF) is a process by which thought content dominates in experience and controls behaviour patterns.
- The process of CD has only received limited attention in chronic pain research in the form of a short report on “decentering”, a process similar to CD
- The purpose of this study is to examine a measure of CF and CD, to determine whether it has adequate psychometric properties for use with people with chronic pain.

Method

Participants (N=326)

- 67.8% women , Age M=47.4 years (sd= 11.8)
- Duration of pain Mdn= 97 months (range 14– 648)
- Participants were consecutive chronic pain referrals who were suitable for a four week residential interdisciplinary pain management programme

Measures

- Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire 13 (CFQ13)
- 0-10 pain scales
- Short Form Health Survey (SF-36)
- Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9)
- Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ-II)
- Chronic Pain Acceptance Questionnaire (CPAQ)

Results

A factor analysis confirmed a two factor scale with an internal consistency of $\alpha = .87$ (M = 52.5, sd = 15.4).

The CFQ achieved medium-sized correlations with measures of social functioning, vitality, and general health, and large-sized correlations with measures of depression and mental health .

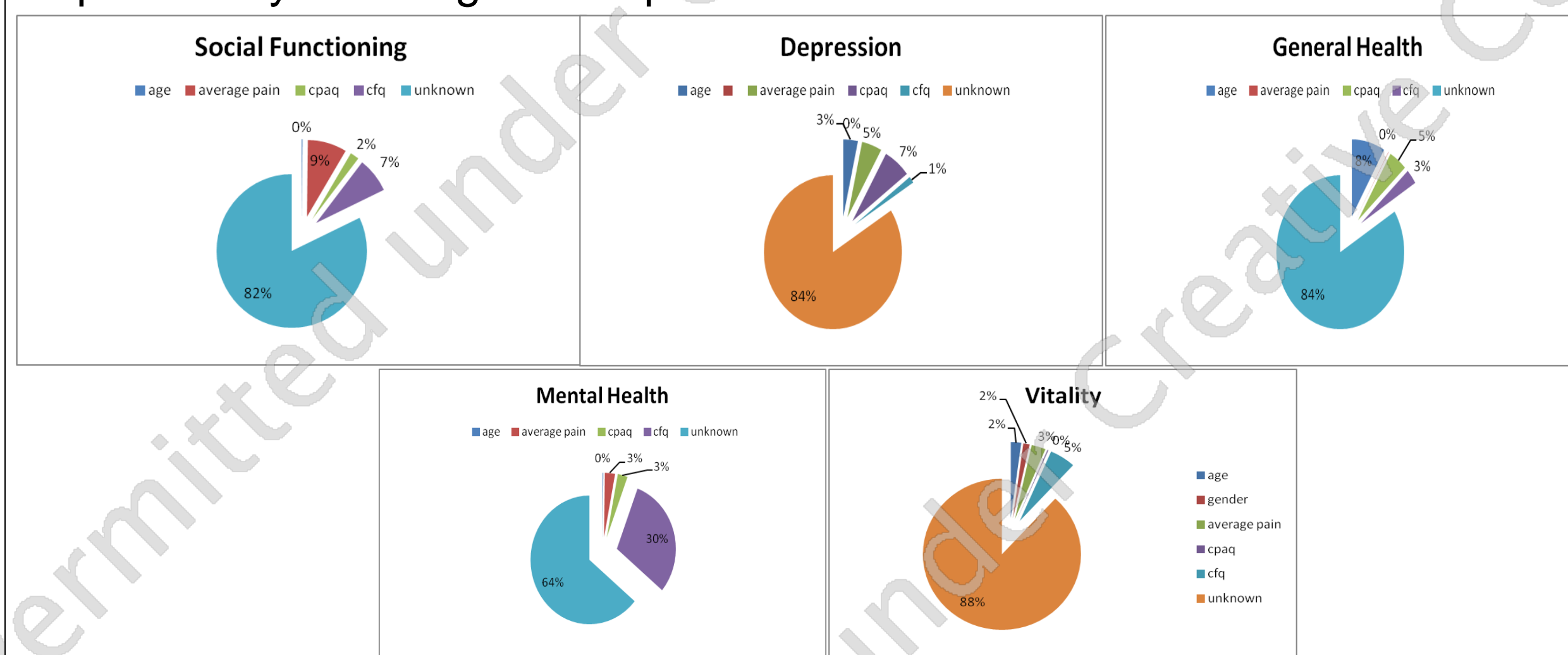
Table 1. Correlation results for the Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire scores in relation to measures of psychological acceptance, pain acceptance, and patient functioning.

*p<.001

	General Acceptance (AAQ-II)	Pain Acceptance (CPAQ)	Depression (PHQ9)	SF36				
				Physical	Mental Health	Social	Vitality	General Health
Cognitive Fusion (CFQ)	.78***	-.53***	.59***	-.10	-.54***	-.41***	-.35***	-.33***
Pain Acceptance (CPAQ)	-.54***		-.51***	.16**	.39***	.37***	.29***	.30***

Regression Analyses

- The CFQ score was a significant predictor in five out of six equations.
- Results are illustrated with pie charts showing increments of variance explained by each significant predictor.



Discussion

- In summary, the CFQ appears to be an effective instrument for assessing CF and CD in people with chronic pain.
- The measure achieved good internal consistency and an exploratory factor analysis confirmed a two factor structure.
- In the regression analyses CF performed as a significant predictor of five out of six measures of patient emotional and social functioning and health, failing only in predicting physical functioning.
- Limitations of the study include its specific population assessed and the use of self report measures.
- These results suggest that methods designed to facilitate CD may help to improve patient functioning.

References

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- Hayes SC, Strosahl KD, Wilson KG. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An experiential approach to behavior change. New York: Guilford, 1999.

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