A Model for Explaining Depression Based on Demoralization Syndrome with the Mediation of Guilt in Caregivers of Patients with Life-Threatening Illnesses

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1. Round 1

1.1 Reviewer 1

Date: 02 December 2023

Reviewer:

The introduction (paragraph 3) briefly touches on previous studies related to caregivers' depression but lacks a comprehensive synthesis of the existing literature. Expanding on how this study fills a specific gap in the literature would strengthen the argument for the study's significance.

In Table 4 (page 5), the explanation of direct and indirect path coefficients lacks sufficient detail for the reader to fully grasp the implications of the results. Include a more detailed discussion on the significance and implications of these coefficients.

Given the study's setting in Iran, the discussion should address cultural factors that may influence caregiving, guilt, and demoralization. Adding a paragraph that considers these cultural dimensions would add depth to the findings.

The term "demoralization syndrome" is used throughout the paper, but its definition is somewhat unclear in some sections. A concise, consistent definition should be provided early in the manuscript and adhered to throughout.

While the manuscript mentions normality assumptions for SEM, it does not discuss other assumptions like multicollinearity or the independence of errors. Consider adding a brief section or footnote discussing these assumptions and how they were addressed.

The "Discussion and Conclusion" section briefly mentions limitations. However, it would benefit from a more detailed examination, particularly regarding potential biases introduced by the non-random sampling method.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

1.2 Reviewer 2

Date: 09 December 2023
Reviewer:

In the "Measures" section, the description of the Beck Depression Inventory's reliability and validity is thorough. However, similar detail is needed for the Eysenck Guilt Inventory and the Demoralization Syndrome Scale, particularly in different cultural contexts or in the population studied.

The choice of SEM as the method for analysis is appropriate but requires more justification. Explain why SEM is the best approach for this study as opposed to simpler regression models, especially in "Data Analysis" (page 3).

The study's conceptual model (Figure 1) lacks clarity in showing how variables are hypothesized to interact. Consider revising the figure to better depict the pathways and relationships between demoralization syndrome, guilt, and depression.

In the section describing Figure 1, the text mentions 12 exogenous variables but only refers to demoralization syndrome and guilt as the main exogenous factors. Clarify or correct this inconsistency.

The discussion on guilt's mediating role (page 7) is insightful but could be enhanced by including potential alternative mediators that were considered and ruled out, explaining why guilt was the focus.

In Table 3 (page 5), the RMSEA value is reported as 0.065. While this is acceptable, a brief explanation of what this value indicates about the model fit would benefit readers unfamiliar with SEM.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.