

**Assessing adolescents' internalizing symptoms using virtual social networks: A format equivalence study of the Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale** (pp. 5-20)

Alejandro de la Torre-Luque<sup>1,2</sup>, Maria Balle<sup>3</sup>, Aina Fiol-Veny<sup>3</sup>,  
Xavier Bornas<sup>3</sup>, and Albert Sese<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Autonomous University of Madrid*; <sup>2</sup>*Network Center for Biomedical Research in Mental Health (CIBERSAM)*; <sup>3</sup>*University of the Balearic Islands (Spain)*

The widespread use of virtual social networks (VSN) by adolescents makes it possible to conduct psychological assessments or health promotion using these platforms. However, psychometric properties of them should be validated. This study aimed to test the feasibility of administering the Revised Child Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS) over a secure social network, while preserving its original psychometric properties. To do so, a sample of 703 adolescents ( $M= 13.86$  years,  $SD= .49$ ) completed the questionnaire either over a social network or using paper and pencil. We tested a two-way format equivalence: quantitative equivalence (comparing score distributions across versions); and qualitative or conceptual equivalence (comparing the between-factor correlations between versions and measurement invariance). As a result, no difference was found between the score distributions of the two versions and between-factor intercorrelations with similar patterns in both versions. Finally, both methods for administering the RCADS showed an adequate fit with their theoretical latent structure, thus preserving format equivalence. To sum up, VSN may, therefore, constitute appropriate contexts for conducting psychological assessment and research among adolescents.