




BRIEF REPORT

Psychometric properties of a Spanish version of the MM-CGI-SF in caregivers of people with dementia

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Abstract

Background: Caregivers of people with dementia may experience characteristic grief linked to present and anticipated losses before the physical death of the care recipient occurs, which is related to physical and mental health problems. The Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Inventory-Short Form (MM-CGI-SF) is an instrument that assesses this type of grief. Since there are no studies on an adaptation of the MM-CGI-SF to the Spanish population, the aim of the study was to evaluate its psychometric properties in a sample of caregivers of dementia patients.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out. The tool was translated and adapted into Spanish, which was administered to 250 caregivers of people with dementia in the province of Huelva, together with other related instruments. Descriptive statistics and internal consistency reliability were calculated using Cronbach's alpha, for the total questionnaire and for each subscale. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed and the Spanish version of the MM-CGI-SF was correlated with the rest of the variables by calculating Spearman's correlation coefficient.

Results: 80.4% of the participants were female and had high levels of caregiver grief ($\bar{x} = 64.62$, $SD = 14.86$). Cronbach's alpha for the general questionnaire was 0.927 and between 0.822–0.854 for its subscales. The fit values of the CFA were: $\chi^2 = 202.033$, degrees of freedom = 121, $\chi^2/df = 1.670$, TLI = 0.954, CFI = 0.963, SRMR = 0.047, RMSEA = 0.052; and all the correlations were statistically significant.

Conclusions: The Spanish version of the MM-CGI-SF shows adequate psychometric properties. Thanks to this instrument, health professionals may measure caregiver grief, get closer to the reality of dementia care, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions to manage this grief.

KEYWORDS

caregiver grief, dementia, MM-CGI-SF, psychometric, Spanish

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INTRODUCTION

Caring for a person diagnosed with dementia is hard work and requires time, energy, and physical effort on the part of the caregivers, who have to bear a heavy burden. It is a situation that has adverse effects on their physical, psychological and social health, and global quality of life.¹

In dementia care, caregivers often suffer specific grief before the physical death of the care recipient occurs. This grief called “caregiver grief”^{2,3} is caused by several factors: by the prolonged time of care, the uncertainty of the illness, the disrupted communication between caregiver and patient; and by the continued losses from the illness. It is characterized by a conflict between emotional response to the losses (of partnership, intimacy, familiar “known” characteristics of the loved one, personal freedom, roles, friendships, etc.) and the need to continue to spend personal time and energy on daily care.^{4–6}

Due to the negative effects that this condition has on caregivers, effective instruments that measure caregiver grief are needed. Such instruments may be used to identify caregivers at risk of inadequate grief management, to evaluate interventions, as well as to prevent a chronic grief after the death of the caregiver. The caregiver grief assessment provides valuable information for understanding and addressing the emotional impact of dementia on caregivers, as well as for developing effective interventions and coping resources within health and social care services.^{3,5}

For the assessment of the caregiver grief, there is a limited number of tools available.⁷ Meuser and Marwit developed the Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory Short Form (MM-CGI-SF),² which was developed in the US population, and it has been adapted in multi-ethnic Asian, Puerto Rican, Turkish, African-American, Chinese, Mandarin Chinese, and British populations,^{8–15} showing good psychometric properties in all of them. Since there are no studies on an adaptation of the MM-CGI-SF to the Spanish population, the aim of this study was to assess its psychometric properties in a sample of caregivers of dementia patients in Spain.

METHODS

Participants and data collection

Following the procedure described by Acquadro, Conway, and GirouDET,¹⁶ a first Spanish version was developed in Spanish. 250 caregivers of people with dementia from the province of Huelva, Spain, were included. The inclusion criteria were: to be informal caregivers of

Key points

- Caregivers of people with dementia suffer from caregiver grief, a characteristic bereavement grief linked to an increased risk of health problems, such as depression, and chronic or complex grief after the death of the care recipient.
- This is the first Spanish version of the Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form (MM-CGI-SF) that assesses the caregiver grief and shows adequate psychometric properties.

Why does this paper matter?

Carers of people with dementia suffer from caregiver grief which is associated with physical and mental health problems. Through the Spanish version of the MM-CGI-SF health professionals will be able to identify caregivers at risk of inadequate grief management, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions in caregivers of people with dementia.

people diagnosed with dementia living at home, aged 18 years or older, and able to read and speak Spanish.

Through the Huelva Provincial Federation of Associations of Relatives of People with Alzheimer's Disease, all those who met the inclusion criteria were contacted. Those who agreed to voluntarily participate were given the informed consent form and the set of measurements, which they completed in approximately 20 min.

Instruments

Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form

The Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form³ is an instrument that assesses caregiver grief in caregivers of people with dementia. It is derived from a 50-item tool, the Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory (MM-CGI).²

This shorter version has 18 items distributed in three subscales of 6 items each: (1) Personal Sacrifice Burden, which measures individual losses experienced as a result of caregiving; (2) Heartfelt Sadness and Longing, which assesses the caregiver's emotional reactions during caregiving; and (3) Worry and Felt Isolation, which measures the feeling of losing connections and support from others. The response scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale that

measures agreement/disagreement. Subscale totals can be calculated, and combined for an overall score. A higher score signifies a more intense grief experience.

The Patient Health Questionnaire-9

This self-administered tool assesses the presence and severity of depressive symptomatology. It comprises 9 items, each rated on a Likert-type scale of four options. Scores are interpreted as follows: 0–4 (minimal depression), 5–9 (mild depression), 10–14 (moderate depression), 15–19 (moderately severe depression), and 20–27 (severe depression).^{17,18}

Caregiver Strain Index

It is a self-report questionnaire with 13 true-false items that assess the perceived overexertion and fatigue in caregivers of severely dependent patients. A score of 7 or more suggests a high level of strain.^{19,20}

Duke–UNC Functional Social Support Questionnaire

This tool assesses subjects' perceptions of the availability of help and support offered by family and friends.^{21,22} With 11 items and a Likert-type response scale (1–5), the score reflects perceived social support, not actual social support. A score ≥ 32 indicates normal perceived social support, while < 32 indicates low perceived social support.

WHOQOL–BREF

The WHOQOL-BREF is a self-administered tool, which measures a person's perception of overall quality of life and general health.²³ It has 26 items, with a Likert-type response scale (1–5) and 4 dimensions: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environment, which can be scored independently. Higher scores indicate a better perceived overall quality of life.

Data analysis

For the description of the sample, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, ranges, and medians) were calculated. For the total questionnaire and for each subscale, internal consistency reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha and, when the item

was removed, also using Cronbach's alpha, considering acceptable scores between 0.70 and 0.90.²⁴ Corrected item-test correlations were also calculated.

For construct validity, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed, selecting the maximum likelihood estimation method for the structural equation model. The following fit indices were calculated, considering the values in brackets as values of a good model fit: comparative fit index (CFI > 0.95), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI > 0.95), standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR < 0.08), and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA < 0.06). The chi-squared to the degree of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) was calculated, considering values of < 2 as acceptable.²⁵

To assess convergent validity, correlations were calculated between the Spanish version of the MM-CGI-SF and the rest of the related variables, expecting to obtain significant positive correlations (with a direct relationship) with PHQ-9 and CSI, and significant negative correlations (with an indirect relationship) with Duke-UNC and WHOQOL-BREF.

Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to assess the normal distribution of the main variables, and due to the non-normal distribution of these variables, Spearman's correlation coefficient was used, considering the association to be significant when $p < 0.05$. IBM SPSS Statistics 26²⁶ and IBM SPSS AMOS 26²⁷ software programs were used for data analysis. The study procedure followed the STROBE guidelines (Data S1).

Ethical considerations

Anonymity, confidentiality, and data processing requirements were maintained at all times, ensuring the ethical standards and principles of all research, according to the declaration of Helsinki. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Province of Huelva.

RESULTS

Description of the sample

The sample consisted of 250 participants. The majority (80.4%) were women, with a mean age of 58.22 years (SD = 12.74). 62% percent were sons or daughters of the patients, the rest being spouses or other relatives.

The mean total score of the MM-CGI-SF was 64.62 (SD = 14.86). The MM-CGI-SF(W&FI) subscale had the lowest score (M = 18.52, SD = 5.70) and the MM-CGI-SF (HS&L) subscale the highest (M = 23.33, SD = 5.42). For the PHQ-9, the mean was 11 (SD = 7), for the CSI it was 7.05 (SD = 3.182), and for the Duke-UNC it was 37.3

TABLE 1 Reliability of the MM-CGI-SF and its subscales.

Cronbach's alpha	MM-CGI-SF Total		MM-CGI-SF(PSB)		MM-CGI-SF(HS&L)		MM-CGI-SF(W&FI)	
	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if the item has been removed	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if the item has been removed	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if the item has been removed	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's alpha if the item has been removed
	0.927		0.854		0.844		0.822	
Item 1	0.64	0.92	0.69	0.82				
Item 2	0.65	0.92	0.67	0.82				
Item 3	0.52	0.92			0.72	0.79	0.51	0.80
Item 4	0.69	0.92						
Item 5	0.60	0.92					0.55	0.80
Item 6	0.56	0.92					0.55	0.80
Item 7	0.62	0.92					0.63	0.78
Item 8	0.55	0.92			0.58	0.82		
Item 9	0.48	0.92			0.40	0.86		
Item 10	0.62	0.92	0.55	0.84				
Item 11	0.65	0.92			0.70	0.80		
Item 12	0.65	0.92			0.68	0.81		
Item 13	0.65	0.92					0.59	0.79
Item 14	0.60	0.92					0.66	0.77
Item 15	0.68	0.92			0.67	0.80		
Item 16	0.71	0.92	0.74	0.81				
Item 17	0.53	0.92	0.58	0.84				
Item 18	0.71	0.92	0.62	0.83				

Abbreviations: MM-CGI-SF, Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form; MM-CGI-SF(HS&L), Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form (Subscale Heartfelt Sadness and Longing); MM-CGI-SF(PSB), Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form (Subscale Personal Sacrifice Burden); MM-CGI-SF(W&FI), Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form (Subscale Worry and Felt Isolation).

(SD = 10.43). In terms of quality of life, the WHOQOL-BREF(SR) subscale had the lowest mean, 8.94 (SD = 2.37), and the WHOQOL-BREF(E) had the highest, 25.28 (SD = 4.76).

Reliability

Internal consistency

Table 1 shows the reliability results of the MM-CGI-SF and its subscales. Cronbach's alpha for the MM-CGI-SF instrument was 0.927. For the MM-CGI-SF(PSB) subscale, it was 0.854; for the MM-CGI-SF(HS&L) subscale, it was 0.844; and for the MM-CGI-SF(W&FI), it was 0.822.

For the global questionnaire, item-total correlations ranged from 0.481 to 0.715. For the MM-CGI-SF(PSB) subscale between 0.552 and 0.743; for the MM-CGI-SF

(HS&L) subscale, between 0.403 and 0.727; and for the MM-CGI-SF(W&FI) subscale, between 0.515 and 0.669.

As for Cronbach's alpha if one item was removed, for the general questionnaire, the figures ranged from 0.920 to 0.926. For the MM-CGI-SF(PSB) subscale, they ranged between 0.810 and 0.845; for the MM-CGI-SF(HS&L) dimension, between 0.798 and 0.862; and for the MM-CGI-SF(W&FI) subscale, between 0.775 and 0.808.

Validity

Confirmatory factor analysis

The fit indices of the CFA were as follows: $\chi^2 = 202.033$, degrees of freedom = 121, $\chi^2/df = 1.670$ TLI = 0.954, CFI = 0.963, SRMR = 0.047, RMSEA = 0.052.

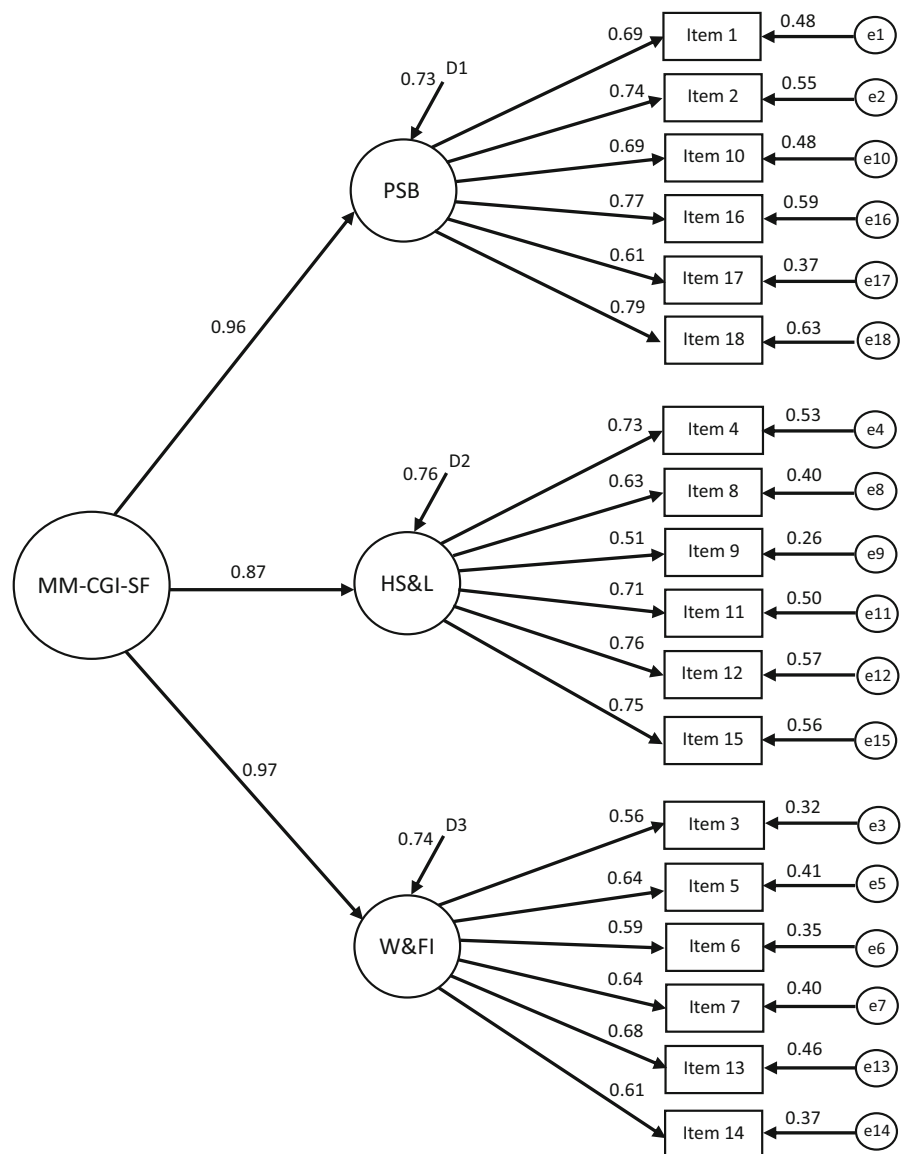


FIGURE 1 Spanish version of the Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form: A model with standardized factor weight and residuals. D1–D3, residual errors for each dimension; e1–e18, residual errors of observed scores of each item; MM-CGI-SF, Marwit–Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form; PSB, Personal Sacrifice Burden; HS&L, Heartfelt Sadness and Longing; W&FI, Worry and Felt Isolation.

Figure 1 shows the proposed model, with the same factors and variables as the original questionnaire.³ Factor 1 (PSB), with items: 1, 2, 10, 16, 17, 18; Factor 2 (HS&L): 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15; and Factor 3 (W&FI): 3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14. All standardized factor loadings were ≥ 0.5 .

Convergent validity

Table 2 shows the Spearman's correlations between the total MM-CFI-SF, its subscales, and the other variables. All correlations were statistically significant and ranged between 0.900 and -0.248 .

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to evaluate the psychometric properties of a Spanish version of the MM-CGI-SF in caregivers of dementia patients.

This is the first study on the adaptation of this tool in Spain, and although the MM-CGI-SF has already been adapted to Spanish with the Puerto Rican population,¹⁰ for other Spanish-speaking populations, it is necessary to adapt and adjust the questionnaire due to the cultural, contextual and linguistic differences of these specific populations. In this way, comprehension, quality of responses, and validity of the results are ensured.²⁸

The internal consistency reliability of the proposed Spanish version of the MM-CGI-SF was adequate,

showing adequate item performance both for the overall MM-CGI-SF and for each of the dimensions. These results are in line with other adaptations of this instrument.^{8–15}

Regarding the factorial structure, the multi-ethnic Asian version,⁸ the Turkish version,¹¹ and the Spanish version of this study show a factorial structure of 3 factors (each with 6 items), reproducing the structure of the original version of the MM-CGI-SF.³

However, the results of the Turkish version,¹¹ in which correlations between residual parameters (errors) were used, should be interpreted with caution, since this practice may mask a poorly specified model by intentionally increasing the fit indices.²⁹ In the study conducted in the Puerto Rican population,¹⁰ although they developed a CFA, they were unable to confirm the original structure. It may be due to a small sample size, far below the minimum 200 cases recommended for a CFA.³⁰ To sum up, in the Spanish population, its original structure seems to be confirmed.

As for the relationship with other variables, the results showed that they were in line with the initial hypotheses. According to these initial assumptions, there should be positive correlations with PHQ-9 and CSI and negative correlations with Duke-UNC and WHOQOL-BREF, indicating an adequate construct validity of the Spanish version of the MM-CGI-SF.

The results of this study show high levels of caregiver grief, as well as significant values for depression, perceived overexertion, perceived social support, and

TABLE 2 Spearman's correlations between the total MM-CFI-SF, its subscales and the rest of the variables.

Variables	MM-CGI-SF Total	MM-CGI-SF(PSB)	MM-CGI-SF(HS&L)	MM-CGI-SF(W&FI)
MM-CGI-SF Total	1.00			
MM-CGI-SF(PSB)	0.87*	1.00		
MM-CGI-SF(HS&L)	0.86*	0.68*	1.00	
MM-CGI-SF(W&FI)	0.90*	0.69*	0.66*	1.00
PHQ-9	0.63*	0.55*	0.46*	0.64*
CSI	0.45*	0.45*	0.32*	0.43*
Duke-UNC	-0.41^*	-0.33^*	-0.27^*	-0.47^*
WHOQOL-BREF(PH)	-0.44^*	-0.38^*	-0.37^*	-0.42^*
WHOQOL-BREF(P)	-0.49^*	-0.46^*	-0.31^*	-0.51^*
WHOQOL-BREF(SR)	-0.43^*	-0.38^*	-0.32^*	-0.43^*
WHOQOL-BREF(E)	-0.37^*	-0.38^*	-0.24^*	-0.36^*

Abbreviations: CSI, Caregiver Strain Index; Duke-UNC, Duke-UNC Functional Social Support Questionnaire; MM-CGI-SF, Marwit-Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form; MM-CGI-SF(HS&L), Marwit-Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form (Subscale Heartfelt Sadness and Longing); MM-CGI-SF(PSB), Marwit-Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form (Subscale Personal Sacrifice Burden); MM-CGI-SF(W&FI), Marwit-Meuser Caregiver Grief Inventory-Short Form (Subscale Worry and Felt Isolation); PHQ-9, Patient Health Questionnaire-9; WHOQOL-BREF(E), WHOQOL-BREF (Subscale Environment); WHOQOL-BREF(P), WHOQOL-BREF (Subscale Psychological); WHOQOL-BREF(PH), WHOQOL-BREF (Subscale Physical health); WHOQOL-BREF(SR), WHOQOL-BREF (Subscale Social relationships).

* $p < 0.0001$.

perceived quality of life. Furthermore, the results show that all these variables are related to each other.

Unlike other versions, this study evaluates caregivers' perceived overall quality of life. As expected, the higher the caregiver grief, the lower the quality of life. Thus, crucial interventions are needed to reduce the caregiver grief, aiming to enhance their quality of life.

In conclusion, the Spanish version of the MM-CGI-SF shows adequate psychometric properties in Spanish caregivers. This study will provide an instrument capable of identifying caregivers of people with dementia with inadequate grief management. In addition, it will be possible to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at managing caregiver grief, as well as to prevent complicated long-term grief, thus decreasing the need for using additional resources.

Limitations

On the one hand, the sample is geographically limited. However, there are no major cultural differences between the different regions of the country, and these results are generalized to the Spanish population. Alternatively, it was not possible to assess test–retest reliability due to difficulties in contacting the study participants.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Study conception and design: Miriam Sánchez-Alcón, Juan Diego Ramos-Pichardo, Elena Sosa-Cordobés, José Luis Sánchez-Ramos. *Contact with participants:* Almudena Garrido-Fernández, Miriam Sánchez-Alcón, Juan Diego Ramos-Pichardo, Elena Sosa-Cordobés. *Data collection:* Miriam Sánchez-Alcón, Juan Diego Ramos-Pichardo, José Luis Sánchez-Ramos. *Data analysis and interpretation:* Miriam Sánchez-Alcón, Juan Diego Ramos-Pichardo, Almudena Garrido-Fernández, José Luis Sánchez-Ramos. *Preparation of manuscript:* Miriam Sánchez-Alcón, Elena Sosa-Cordobés, Almudena Garrido-Fernández.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

SPONSOR'S ROLE

The sponsor had no role in the design, methods, subject recruitment, data collections, analysis or preparation of the manuscript.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

Data S1. STROBE Statement—Checklist of items included in this cross-sectional study.

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