Education & Training

WURSS: An Instrument to Measure the Severity and Duration of the Common Cold

WARF: P01142US

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The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) is seeking commercial partners interested in developing an instrument for measuring the severity and functional impact of the common cold.

Overview

Several validated systems exist for measuring the symptoms and severity of human ailments such as diabetes, asthma and heart conditions.

The Invention

Now, a group of UW-Madison medical researchers has developed an instrument for measuring the severity and functional impact of the common cold. The instrument, called the Wisconsin Upper Respiratory Symptom Survey (WURSS), provides a comprehensive set of questions covering cold symptoms and related quality-of-life outcomes experienced by cold-sufferers.

Long (WURSS-44) and short (WURSS-21) versions are now available. Patients complete the survey – in either electronic or hard-copy form – and the results are analyzed statistically.

The original survey was created using previous scales, expert opinion and common knowledge. It was later expanded and refined based on its use in a randomized trial testing the effectiveness of *Echinacea* as a cold remedy, and through interviews and focus groups with survey participants. The questionnaire measures specific cold symptoms, symptoms clusters (dimensions), functional impact, and global severity.

The WURSS-44 has now undergone formal validity testing. Internal validity is supported by favorable reliability and responsiveness coefficients. External validity is supported by strong associations of WURSS with the SF-8 (a general health instrument) and the Jackson cold scale. Importantly, WURSS is both more comprehensive and more sensitive (better responsiveness) than either comparison instrument. A subset of items have been selected for the short form WURSS-21. More details on validation and item reduction can be obtained from the researchers through the link below.

Applications

- Studies of cold morbidity by public health officials
- Testing of new cold remedies by pharmaceutical companies

Key Benefits

- Sensitive, reliable and easy-to-use
- Developed through use in a clinical trial with over 140 participants, and through a qualitative instrument development project involving nearly 75 adults
- The WURSS instruments are available in many translations

Additional Information

For More Information About the Inventors

- Bruce Barrett

Related Technologies

- More information about WURSS is available on the researchers' website.
- If you would like to license WURSS for academic or nonprofit scholarly purposes, visit http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/external-funded/wurss/use.
- If you would like to license WURSS for commercial purposes, contact our licensing team.

Publications

- Barrett et al. 2002. The Wisconsin Upper Respiratory Symptom Survey (WURSS) – A New Research Instrument for Assessing the Common Cold. J. Fam. Pract. 51, U5-U15.

Tech Fields

- Education & Training : Medical & health

For current licensing status, please contact Justin Anderson at janderson@warf.org or 608-960-9853