## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Adaptation of the Turkish version of the Violence Profile for Current Offense to evaluate the violence severity of index offense

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Dear Editor,

There is a long-standing public and scientific debate on the question of whether mental disorders directly lead to violent behavior; however, the accumulated data and current research primarily addresses to what extent mental illnesses may be associated with violent behavior, as a means to understand the relationship, which may be mediated or driven by many psychopathological and external determinants (1). Different definitions of violence adopted in studies have led to diverging results. For instance, some authors include verbal aggression in their definition of violence, while others only consider direct physical violence (2). Some separate offending behaviors into non-violent and violent categories, but because there is a lack of specific criteria to demonstrate whether a behavior is violent or not, such categorization raises potential concerns about social stigma and discrimination and presents certain limitations for research (3). As a result of this definition dilemma and the widespread agreement that some offenses are more severe than others, it was acknowledged that there was a need to develop methods to identify the severity of violence in psychiatric/psychological and criminological research in order to understand this multifaceted phenomenon and the adverse effects on individuals and society. Some

studies have attempted to classify and rate violence severity or seriousness according to legal definitions (2,4), sentencing duration (5,6), intent or motive (7–9), socioeconomic impact and public perception (5,10), or lethality (11), while some have developed coding systems according to the harm inflicted on the victim (12,13), epidemiological characteristics (8,14), or scenario-based techniques (15). However, issues of sensitivity remain. Therefore, we aimed to introduce Turkish researchers to an instrument that encompasses all types of offending behavior that will enable them to evaluate the violence profile of property and public order offenses in addition to offenses of interpersonal violence.

The preliminary data were retrieved from the dataset of another study conducted by the authors. A total of 142 criminal offenses committed by 63 male subjects were evaluated using the Violence Profile for Current Offense (VPCO) classification developed by Taylor (16) to grade the seriousness of the index offense. Data related to index offenses were acquired from hard files and electronic databases of forensic case records. The original classification system was translated into Turkish by Yasin Hasan Balcioglu, considering the definitions of crimes in Turkish criminal law, and back-translated into English by Simge Seren Kirlioglu-Balcioglu, who was blinded to the original items. Once

the semantic equivalence of the items was established, the content equivalence of all of the items was evaluated. No items were found to be irrelevant (see final version in Table 1). Brislin's established guidelines (17) were followed to ensure the translation quality and that a functionally equivalent translation of the original had been achieved. The inter-rater reliability of the Turkish version of the VPCO was examined using the scores of each offense provided by 2 independent administrators (Author 1 and Author 2), and the intraclass correlation coefficient was 0.98. Two independent administration results were also used to calculate the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient, which was 0.98. Another Turkish version of the VPCO has been used (18), however, this report may provide a significant contribution in terms of demonstrating the reliability of this adaptation and facilitating standardized use. According to our preliminary results, we encourage the application of this Turkish version of the VPCO in the severity assessment of violence of any type of offense in forensic settings. Furthermore, we believe that proper assessment of the severity of violent behavior related to mental disorders could aid in improving clinically feasible prediction models and tools in both clinical and forensic settings.

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**Appendix 1: Turkish version of the Violence Profile for Current Offense**

**Mevcut suç için şiddet profili**

**0** Tamamen şiddet dışı

**1** Minimal şiddet

a) Sözel saldırganlık

b) Kullanılmayan silahı taşıma

c) Kaza sonucu mala hafif zarar verme

**2** Orta düzeyde şiddet

a) Basit yaralama

b) Zor kullanarak cinsel suç

c) Yaralama olmaksızın silah kullanma

d) Mala kasten zarar verme

**3** Orta düzeyde ciddi şiddet

a) Kasten yaralama

b) Hayatı tehdit edebilecek ve nitelikli mala zarar verme

**4** Ciddi şiddet

a) Mağduru/mağdurları öldürme

b) Hayati tehlike oluşturacak ve mağdurun hastanede 24 saatten uzun kalmasına neden olacak yaralama