Neuropathic pain screening questionnaires have limited measurement properties. A systematic review

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Objectives: The Douleur Neuropathique 4 (DN4), ID Pain, Leeds Assessment of Neuropathic Symptoms and Signs (LANSS), PainDETECT, and Neuropathic Pain Questionnaire have been recommended as screening questionnaires for neuropathic pain. This systematic review aimed to evaluate the measurement properties (e.g. criterion validity and reliability) of these questionnaires.

Study Design and Setting: Online database searches were conducted and two independent reviewers screened studies and extracted data. Methodological quality of included studies and the measurement properties were assessed against established criteria. A modified Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation approach was used to summarize the level of evidence.

Results: Thirty-seven studies were included. Most studies recruited participants from pain clinics. The original version of the DN4 (French) and Neuropathic Pain Questionnaire (English) had the most number of satisfactory measurement properties. The ID Pain (English) demonstrated satisfactory hypothesis testing and reliability, but all other properties tested were unsatisfactory. The LANSS (English) was unsatisfactory for all properties, except specificity. The PainDETECT (English) demonstrated satisfactory hypothesis testing and criterion validity. In general, the cross-cultural adaptations had less evidence than the original versions.

Conclusion: Overall, the DN4 and Neuropathic Pain Questionnaire were most suitable for clinical use. These screening questionnaires should not replace a thorough clinical assessment.

Biography
Stephanie is a PhD student at the musculoskeletal department of The George Institute for Global Health, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney, Australia. Her thesis, “managing neuropathic pain and sciatica” will have evaluated the measurement properties of neuropathic pain screening tools, investigated Australian trends of analgesic medicines prescribed for back pain and sciatica, critically appraised medicines used in combination for back pain and sciatica and is part of an multidisciplinary team investigating the efficacy of pregabalin in patients with sciatica. Her focus on musculoskeletal care commenced in 2007. She continues in private practice and teaching whilst completing her PhD.

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