

Psychometric properties of the Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire (ATQ) in family caregivers

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Although there is evidence that the depression level in caregivers is associated with their negative thoughts with the Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire (ATQ) being the most widely used instrument to assess these negative thoughts, there is no data of the psychometric properties of the ATQ in caregivers. In the current study, trained independent evaluators administered the ATQ and assessed the level of depressive symptoms and the diagnosis of major depressive episodes in 592 family caregivers (87.2% women, mean age of 55.4 years). The internal consistency of the ATQ was .96. Three factors explained 56.3% of the total variance. There was a significant correlation between depressive symptomatology and negative thoughts ($r = .684, p < .001$). The ATQ differentiated between depressed and non-depressed caregivers, correctly classifying 86.8% of cases. A score of 52 was an adequate cut-off to differentiate depressed caregivers from non-depressed caregivers (sensitivity= 80.9%, specificity= 75.5%). The results indicate that the ATQ is a reliable and valid instrument to evaluate negative thoughts in the family caregiver population.