

# Developing an instrument to measure the relationship between social worker and client in cancer counseling – psychometric properties of the German Cancer Counseling Relationship Questionnaire (CanCoRQ)

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### Background:

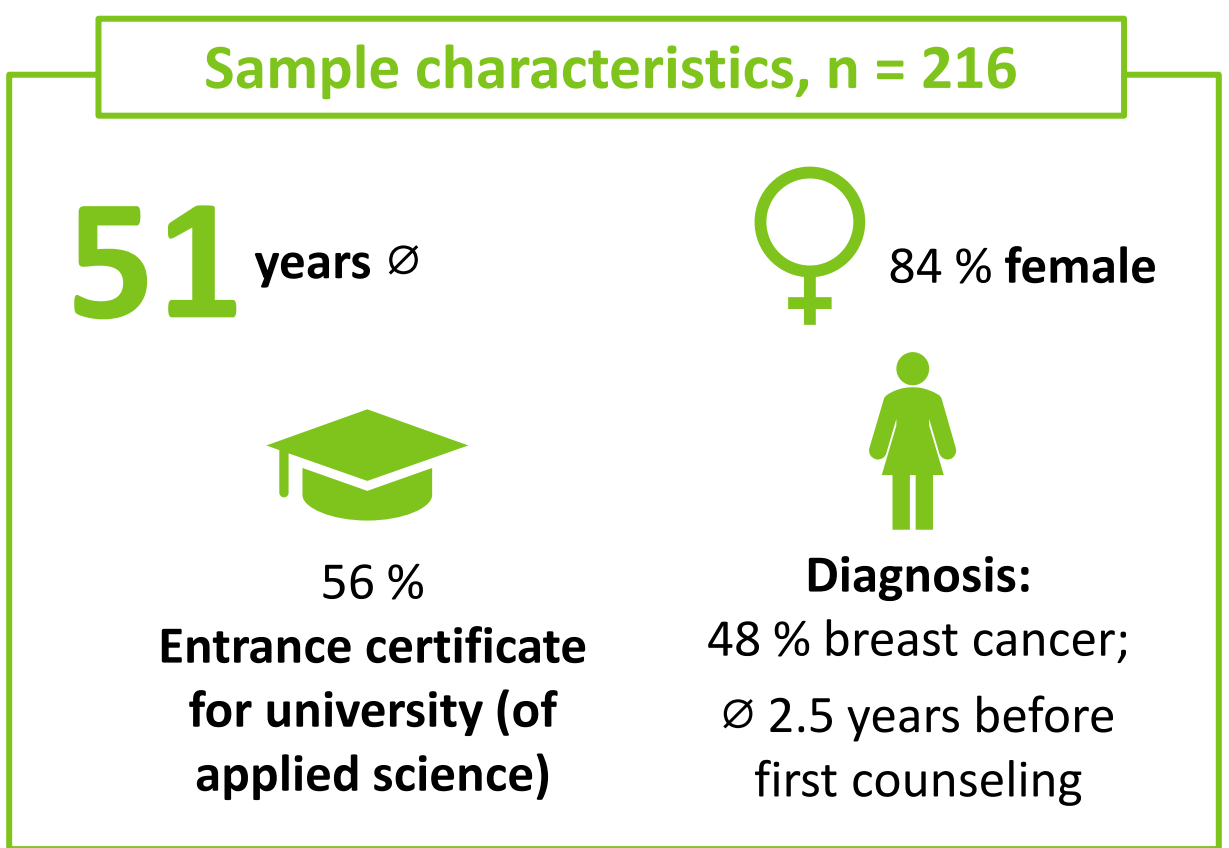
- The relationship between the helping person and the client is a particularly relevant factor for success in counseling and therapy processes.<sup>1,2</sup>
- However, to date, there no instrument measures the relationship between social worker and client in the outpatient cancer counseling setting.
- The aim of this study is therefore to **develop and validate an instrument** with such purpose.

**What are outpatient cancer counseling centers in Germany?**  
Social workers and psycho-oncologists offer free psycho-social counseling for everyone who is affected by cancer

### Methods:

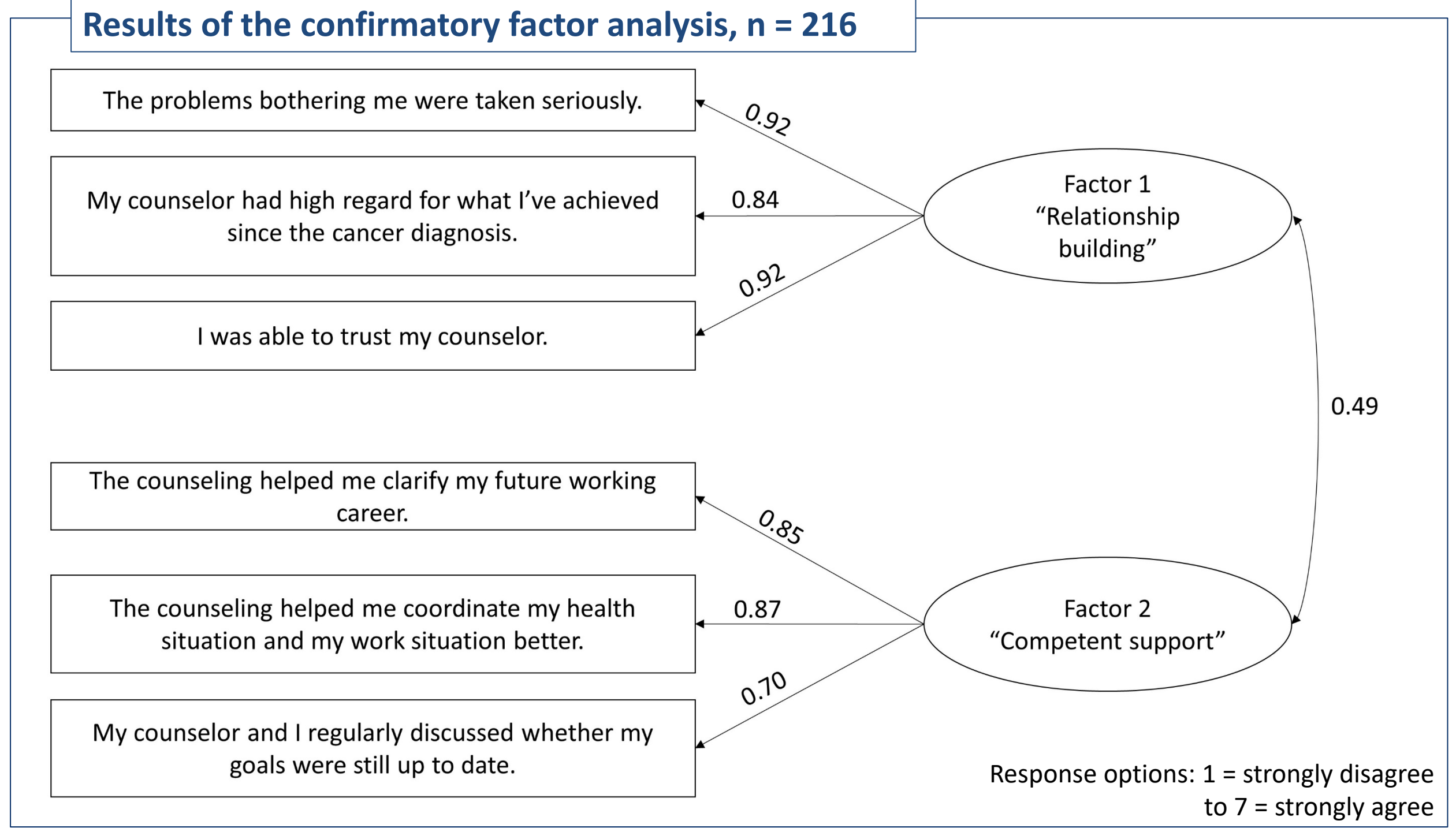
- **Development of the initial items:** The questionnaire development was based on the literature and in collaboration with cancer counseling experts. The initial questionnaire contained 21 items.
- **Data collection:** CARES-study; May-December 2023; Cancer survivors who sought advice regarding their professional situation in 19 outpatient cancer counseling centers; Questionnaire at the beginning of the counseling and 3 months after beginning of the counseling
- **Aim of the CARES-study:** development and evaluation of an intensified needs-based intervention provided by specially trained counselors in outpatient cancer counseling centers for cancer survivors who have employment-related questions
- **Inclusion criteria:** an oncological disease, problems and/or counseling needs regarding the occupational situation (from training to retirement phase), age of majority, sufficient German language skills, no cognitive limitations that impede participation in surveys or interviews and informed consent
- **Data analysis:** Exploratory factor analysis (Varimax), confirmatory factor analysis

### Results:



**Model fit indicators, n = 216**

	CFI	RMSEA	SRMSR
Thresholds	$\geq 0.95$	$< 0.06$	$< 0.08$
Final model	0.995	0.049	0.036



### Discussion:

- The questionnaire's initial structure of 21 items and five factors was reduced to six items and two factors: "**relationship building**", containing the establishment of an open communication environment, and "**competent support**", including clarification and negotiation as well as support and accompaniment processes. The two factors together, thus, represent **aspects of process as well as outcome quality** that are both relevant for a successful client-social worker relationship.
- The developed questionnaire shows **satisfactory psychometric properties**.
- It is an **evaluation tool specific for cancer counseling**. It will initially be used to evaluate an intensified counseling program developed to support cancer survivors returning to work after cancer. In the future, it may also be further developed as an instrument for quality assurance and management in general cancer counseling.

### Limitations:

- Sample: above-average numbers of women and of individuals with higher educational levels in comparison with cancer patients in general
- Pretest: only one cognitive think-aloud interview took place before data collection

### Literature:

<sup>1</sup>Flückiger C, Del Re AC, Wampold BE, Horvath AO. The alliance in adult psychotherapy: A meta-analytic synthesis. *Psychotherapy*. Dezember 2018;55(4):316–40.  
<sup>2</sup>Sinai-Glazer H. The Essentials of the Helping Relationship between Social Workers and Clients. *Soc Work*. 1. Juli 2020;65(3):245–56.