

Author's response to reviews

Title: Gender differences in patients with dizziness and unsteadiness regarding self-perceived disability, anxiety, depression, and its associations

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Point-by-point description of the changes made.

Again we thank the reviewers for their time and work for reviewing and improving the submitted manuscript.

Title: Gender differences in patients with dizziness and unsteadiness regarding self-perceived disability, anxiety, depression, and its associations.

Reviewer: KATHRINE JAUREGUI-RENAUD

Comment (1) (Background)

The reader should know, from the introduction, that the data for this study were primarily collected to investigate the validity and reliability of the German version of the DHI.

Response: We added this information (p 5). All new text (second revision) is written in blue.

Comment (2) (Background)

Since the study is aimed to compare the prevalence of anxiety and depression in women and men of the study-population with the one of a German speaking general population, the introduction should give the reader a better background, about the relationship between gender and anxiety and depression in the general population, including the influence of several factors.

Response: In the submitted manuscript we declared the comparison of the prevalence rates of anxiety/ depression in our study-population with the one of a German speaking general population as additional objective. But we considered

your suggestion in the discussion section (p 16/ 17). Beside the list of general factors associated with anxiety/ depression we now added information about gender specific risk factors.

Comment (3) (Background/ Methods)

The cut-off criteria used to interpret the HADS are described twice (Background and Methods).

Response: We deleted the information about the cut-off criteria of the HADS in the background section (p 4).

Comment (4) (Background)

If the study is descriptive and the analysis is just exploratory, the paragraph about the aims of the study should be rewritten, to state that this is an exploratory analysis to identify trends, instead of “hypothesizing”.

Response: We adapted the paragraph according to your suggestion (p 6).

Comment (5)

Authors should support the use of the total scores to compare means, according to each scale development and validity.

Response: In the method section we added information about the results of surveys investigating the internal validity of the questionnaires (DHI, VSS, HADS). According to the results of the factor analyses we applied only the total scale of the DHI, whereas we used the original subscales of the VSS and HADS (p 7/ 8).

Comment (6) (Method)

In the Methods section, authors should state clearly that the study size and data collection were not designed to compare groups and to estimate prevalence.

Response: We adapted this section according to your advice (p 9).

Comment (7) (Method)

Since this is an exploratory study and patients with vestibular migraine and Meniere disease have shown significantly higher prevalence of anxiety and depression than patients with vestibular neuritis and benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (Ketola2007, Eckhardt-Henn 2008), the reader would appreciate a description of any effect of this factor on the results.

Response: In the result section we report our findings regarding the associations between the groups of diagnoses and anxiety, depression and disability. According to your advice we added information about previous study results in the discussion section (p 16).

Comment (8) (Discussion)

The limitations of the study are still not fully described.

Response: We think that we listed the most critical limitations: secondary analysis of existing data, study design, absent sample size calculation, recruitment, unequal number of participating female and male, missing predefined co-variables of anxiety, depression, disability, incompleteness of co-variables, disadvantages of the HADS, discussion about the appropriate statistics. We added some more limitations on p 15 (disadvantages and consequences of the HADS), p 16/ 17 (topic: gender specific risk factors), and p 17 (topic: gender differences in the distribution of mental disorders, risk factors, symptoms and signs of mood disorders).