Reviewer's report

Title: Measurement Invariance of the CES-D among the Chinese and Dutch Elderly

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Reviewer: Jennifer S Cheavens

Reviewer's report:

Review of “Measurement invariance of the CES-D among the Chinese and Dutch elderly”

1. The question by the authors is well-defined. The authors compared the factor structure of the CES-D in an elderly Chinese and an elderly Dutch sample. The authors found that the four-factor model fit the data best in both samples and that the factor structure was invariant across the samples. The results for invariance in the metric and scalar relations were less strong, although there was evidence of partial invariance in these areas.

2. The methods are appropriate and adequately described.

3. The data appear to be sound.

a. I did wonder, however, why gender was not included in any of the initial analyses, given that the authors point out significant gender differences on the CES-D in elderly samples?

4. The manuscript appears to adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

5. The discussion and conclusions are primarily supported by the data.

a. The authors provide relevant caveats regarding the metric and scalar variance; however, toward the end of the section on measurement invariance, the authors seem a bit liberal about their interpretation of Cheung and Rensvold (1998, 1999) suggestion that factor mean comparisons can be compared if the number of non-invariant items of a scale are “rather small.” I would not interpret the proportion of the non-invariant items as small. Although the authors do provide a citation by Baumgartner (1998), suggesting that means can be compared if even one item is invariant, this seems to be a relatively liberal position.

b. Also, although the authors do discuss what interpretations might be made regarding the partial invariance, I would like to see more of a discussion of why this finding might be important or how we are to interpret existing CESD data drawn from these populations. Should these findings change how we interpret existing data drawn from elderly Chinese and Dutch populations?

6. The limitations of the work are clearly stated.

7. Although the authors do provide relevant citations to the work on which they are building, there are some important topic areas that do not get the attention deserved in the introduction.
a. Although both samples are comprised of elderly adults, there is very little discussion of depression in the elderly or how the CES-D compares to other measures of depressive symptoms in the elderly. There is a section entitled “CES-D and Elderly Populations” but this section includes discussion of social and cultural issues as well.

b. I also would like to see more discussion of why the Chinese and Dutch samples, in particular, would be good places to start this line of investigation.

8. The title and abstract do accurately convey what is reported in the paper.

9. There are several grammatical and writing errors throughout the paper. It might be possible to streamline the paper in several areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this submission.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.