Reviewer’s report

Title: The Assessment of Recalled Parental Rearing and its Relationship to Life Satisfaction and Interpersonal Problems: A General Population Study

Version: 1 Date: 4 December 2007

Reviewer: Luis Rajmil

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript presents the results of the German version of a questionnaire addressed to measure perceived parental rearing. Authors have analyzed reliability and validity of the instrument in terms of its internal consistency, dimensional structure, and construct validity (age and gender differences, and convergent validity). The questionnaire was administered to a large general population sample from Germany during 1994. The study was well designed and presented. Nevertheless, major changes will be necessary to improve the manuscript in terms of its analyses and presentation of the results.

Major changes

Introduction

1) The introduction is difficult to follow. Authors spent more than 2 pages commenting on the different versions of the instrument. This section should be shortened and more focused to the central point of the manuscript. Almost all mention to the questionnaire should be moved to the methods section where authors should briefly justify what version they have decided to adapt, why, and what are the main differences with the previous versions, etc.

2) One of the main problems of the present manuscript is that a priori hypotheses are lacking. This is the main limitation of the study. Readers don’t know if the differences found were as expected or not (e.g. differences by age, gender, etc). Then, authors should include what they have expected to find in terms of internal consistency, structure of the questionnaire, and known group and convergent validity. Hypotheses could be stated in the statistical analysis section (please see below).

Methods

3) Statistical analysis should be explained better. A separate section within the methods section would be more adequate to present the analysis carried out than the current structure of the manuscript. Authors should avoid presenting analysis and results at the same time. On the other hand, related to the analysis carried out to assess convergent and discriminant validity, it would be better if authors analyses differences by age and gender from both parent and respondent in a multivariate analysis of variance. The Similar comment would be applied to the convergent validity analysis.
4) An explanation of all possible score ranges, the percentage of people in the highest score (ceiling effect) and the lowest score (floor effect), and percentage of missing values for each item/scales should also be included. Moreover, it should be added a sentence helping readers to interpret the results (e.g. high score mean better control and over protection).

Results
5) In general, results are concise and well presented. Nevertheless, as it was commented above, it is difficult to interpret the differences found. For example scores of 13.30 vs 11.88 in paternal and maternal Rejection and punishment respectively are meaningful or simply due to a large sample size?

6) Results from the factor analysis: besides item 13 (page 8, 2nd paragraph), how authors interpret results from the item 10 in the control and over protection dimension? Factor loadings higher than 0.25-0.30 in more than one scale are difficult to interpret. Similar question could be asked related to the correlation with other scales: how authors interpret, for example, correlations with FLZ leisure: -0.09*, -0.08*, -0.03 for the parental FEE scale?.

Discussion
7) Discussion should be changed in line with the above proposed comments.

Minor changes
8) One of the main limitations of the study that authors have mentioned is the memory bias and also subjective representation that could be associated with the present mood. Do authors think that a cohort effect could also be influenced the results?

9) Tables should be self-explanatory, and the range of n= should also be added in all tables.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have been worked together with the third author in an European group until 2004