Reviewer's report

Title: Patients presenting with somatic complaints in general practice: depression, anxiety and somatoform disorders are frequent and associated to psychosocial stressors

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Reviewer: Barbara Tomenson

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Patients presenting with somatic complaints in general practice: depression, anxiety and somatoform disorders are frequent and associated to psychosocial stressors.

L. Herzig et al.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Title. ‘associated to’ should be replaced by ‘associated with’.

Methods, line 3. Does the physical complaint reported at the start of the consultation need to be a new complaint for the patient to qualify for entry into the study? If not, then some indication of the numbers of patients with new or existing complaints would be useful.

Methods paragraph 2. What happened if a patient was excluded? Was a replacement found from the rest of that day’s patients?.. and, if so, how?

Methods, last paragraph. I think this should say that patients were included if they gave oral consent to participate, and if they consented to their personal information being sent to the data centre.

Statistical methods, last paragraph. Were previously diagnosed physical disorders recorded, and was this considered as an additional confounder?

Results, paragraph 1.

How many patients were found to be ineligible for this study for the various reasons listed in the methods section?

The authors may like to comment on the mean consultation length of 27 minutes, as this seems very long to me.

35% of the subjects were either retired or receiving a pension and 35% were employed. What about the remaining 30% of the patients?

The leading diagnostic categories mentioned only amounts to 62% of the patients. What were the categories for the remainder?

Some differences on table 1 are mentioned in the text, but were any formal
statistical tests done to back up these claims?

Discussion. The authors should comment on the fact that the stressors appear to have a slightly lower impact on levels of somatoform disorders than on anxiety and depression.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The label 0 on the y-axis of figure 2 should be 1.

Discussion, last paragraph, line 7. Reversal should be reverse.

Discretionary revisions
I feel that figure 1 and related text would benefit from the inclusions of patient numbers as well as percentages. Similarly percentages for the ‘All patients’ column would be useful, as well as both numbers and percentages for the other results mentioned in the text.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests