Reviewer's report

Title: Functional illness in primary care: dysfunction versus disease

Version: 1 Date: 5 November 2007

Reviewer: Christina M C. Van der Feltz-Cornelis

Reviewer's report:

General This article attempts to give an overview of the possibilities to use the Biopsychosocial model in treatment of MUPS and states that differentiation between pathology and dysfunction could help to overcome treatment difficulties in this group.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached) Although quite some references are mentioned, relevant literature on the BioPsychosocial model is lacking, e.g. the work of Reissner, Huyse, and van der Feltz-Cornelis. The literature on many functional symptoms of Wessely, and Nimnuan, is not reviewed thoroughly, and thus their point is missed. Also, the fact that Fink replicated those findings in 2007 should be mentioned.

The authors mention the importance of the spirit in a very short paragraph, this paragraph only would be worth an article. They should either explore, or delete this part. They also mention Chines, Aryuvedic and old Britisch medicine as interesting methods. If they want to explore this, that would be an interesting medical antropolgy [paper, but in this context it remains unclear why this medicine is chosen, and what the benefits could be and why, and what that should mean for Western medicine. Finally, al this is interesting, but rather superficial and nothing strikes me as new material or insights. The point that the authors want to make, that is to not only search for pathology but also for dysfunction, is common practice since decades.

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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