Author's response to reviews

Title: Screening and diagnosing depression in women visiting GPs' drop in clinic in primary health care

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Referee 2 raises some concerns about the article and we answer these point-by-point.

I. The reviewer states that our results concerning prevalence, severity and socio-demographic features remain poorly outstanding.

Concerning the prevalence and severity we want to underline that we studied women visiting one form of health care, the GPs’ drop in clinic. The results of this study might contribute to deeper understanding of the complexity of problems the GP meet during these short consultations.

II. The Authors instead still underlined the importance of reported psychological symptoms to discriminate between depressed and non-depressed patients. Even if this is a result come out from the study, the reviewer suggests again more caution, given that 1/3 of depressed patients did not report psychological symptoms even if they are truly depressed. Furthermore, it is well known that a large proportion of depressed patients, particularly in the elderly, focus on somatic symptoms and this fact is a major problem in the recognition of depression.

More caution is given to the remark from the reviewer concerning that 1/3 of depressed women did not mention any mental symptoms. We have added in the Abstract in the paragraph of Results a sentence: “Nearly one third of the depressed women did not mention mental symptoms.” In the manuscript in Discussion (page 15) we have also added a sentence: “One the other hand it should be kept in mind that nearly one third of the depressed women do not mention mental symptoms.”

III. On the other hand, is poorly stressed the fact that the “two-stage screening procedure” is more effective, with a low % of dropouts, when fully carried out by the GP instead than by a specialist in the second step.

In order to elucidate this better we changed the order of the first two sentences in Abstract the Results and start with: “The two-stage method…”. In Conclusions (page 16) we have added a sentence: “The “two step screening method” was in this study fully carried out by GPs and it was effective with a low dropout rate.”

IV. Finally, the reviewer suggests shortening the paper.

The manuscript is shortened mainly in mainly in Background and in Discussion the in the paragraphs Prevalence, Severity of Depression, Clinical characteristics. In addition, shortenings are made in Results (page 9).

The new shorter formulations are marked in yellow, and text that is deleted is marked as cancelled in this manuscript.