Reviewer’s report

Title: Sleep problems and functional disability in children with functional gastrointestinal disorders: An examination of the potential mediating effects of physical and emotional symptoms

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Reviewer: Christine Chambers

Reviewer’s report:

This paper describes the results of a study examining sleep disturbances among a large sample of children aged 8-17 years with functional gastrointestinal disorders (FGIDs). Questionnaire measures of sleep, emotional functioning, physical symptoms and functional disability were completed by children and/or caregivers. The children were diagnosed with an FGID by a gastroenterologist. Given the reliance of the current study on self-report of sleep (in the absence of any objective sleep measure, such as actigraphy), and the fact that other studies examining sleep in children (using questionnaires) and chronic pain, including recurrent abdominal pain have already been published, I was initially expecting not to be overly excited about this paper and its contribution. However, the paper is so well written and presented, and the data analysis (structural equation modeling) so sophisticated and well described that I felt very positively about the work after reading the paper.

I have only a few minor comments about the paper, all of which I would classify (as requested by the journal) as Minor Essential or Discretionary Revisions

It appears the authors examined sex (rather than gender) differences yet they use the term gender. The authors should be careful regarding their language use in the presentation of sex vs. gender differences.

Is there any evidence for the reliability of the specific FGID diagnosis?

The authors provide good evidence in support of their selection of the Sleep Disturbance Scale for Children but they might wish to justify why they did not select the other popular measure of sleep disturbances in children (the Children’s Sleep Habits Questionnaire by Owens; presumably because of the age range of their sample?).

When discussing their finding of approximately half of their sample having sleep disturbances, the authors should note how common sleep disturbances are in healthy children with no other clinical issues.

The additional limitation of the lack of a control group of healthy children without FGID should also be noted in the limitations section of the Discussion.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No conflicts.