Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of coaching on the simulated malingering of memory impairment

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Reviewer: Marko Jelicic

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The authors studied the effect of different types of coaching on performance of instructed malingerers on three tests: two tests designed to measure malingering of memory problems and a standard memory test, the VLMT. One malinger test, the FIT, looks more difficult than it is. The other malinger test, the STM-BSV, is a symptom validity test. Results showed that, while the VLMT and the FIT are unable to detect malingerers, the STM-BSV could detect simulators. Unfortunately, this latter test was not immune to the effects of coaching.

Although this paper is well-written, I do have a number of comments:

1] p. 5. The authors describe two approaches to detect malingering. Some forensic neuropsychologists have proposed another method for malingering detection: looking at inconsistencies in test results. This method could also be mentioned here.

2] p. 7 (below “The present study”). appering should be appearing.

3] p. 9. Participants were either undergraduate students or young professionals, but in the final sentence on this page it is said that all participants were students. How many participants were young professionals? How were participants recruited? Did they receive any financial compensation for taking part in the study?

4] p. 10. Why did the participants receive the instructions one week prior to testing? Were there any participants who had forgotten the instructions?

5] p. 12-13. I think the range of scores and cut offs (if available) for the different tests should be given here.

6] p. 14. What p-value is considered significant by the authors? (Because of multiple testing I do not think that p< 0.05 would be appropriate.)

7] p. 18-22. What is the efficacy of other effort tests (e.g. the Word Memory Test or the Test of Memory Malingering) to detect coached simulators? Are these test better able to detect coached malingerers than the STM-BSV? In my view, addressing this issue may somewhat improve The Discussion.

Comment 1 and 7 relate to "Discretionary Revisions", all the other comments require "Minor Essential Revisions".
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:

"I declare that I have no competing interests"