Reviewer's report

Title: The Birth Memories and Recall Questionnaire (BirthMARQ): Development and evaluation

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Reviewer: Susanne Grylka-Baeschlin

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The Birth Memories and Recall Questionnaire (BirthMARQ): Development and evaluation

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General aspects
The authors conducted an interesting study resulting in a new questionnaire. However, the method and especially the development process of the questionnaire is partially not clearly described, leading to several comments and questions:

Abstract
1. Method: The authors describe only the administration of the questionnaires but nothing about development and evaluation of the scale:
Requirement: Please describe in the method part of the abstract more in detail
2. Results: “…with the exception of PTSD and sensory memory and reliving”. This is not clear.
Question: Did the authors not find differences or were these differences not consistent with previous findings?

Background:
3. Page 4/5: last paragraph: the authors describe the topic presented in the current study at the beginning of the paragraph and the aim of the study at the end. In between there is a description of the item reduction of the questionnaire and how the validity of the instrument was tested. This should be part of the method section:
Requirement: Please restructure the last paragraph of the background chapter
4. Nearly two thirds (29/46) of the literature is older than 8 years (2005 and older); there is a single reference from 2012 and none from 2013.
Please consider more recent references?

Method:
5. Page 5 Design: Why do the authors describe results (six identified components) of the principal component analysis and the validity analysis in this subchapter?

6. Page 5: Characteristics of the participants should not be part of the method chapter but of the result chapter.

7. Page 6: The authors describe the development process of the administered version of the birth memories and recall questionnaire in the subchapter “Materials” and the other administered scales in the “Mental health” subchapter. Why are there two subchapters to describe the instrument, which are the administered scales?

8. Page 6: In the first paragraph, the authors describe the initial item pool and in the second paragraph they state a final set of 59 items. However, the number of items of the initial pool and the method of reduction to achieve the final item pool are not described.

Requirement: Please describe this part of the questionnaire development more in detail.

9. Page 7, analysis: Could you explain why you used the principal component analysis instead of the factor analysis? Half of the items were deleted only because of skewed distribution, which requires more explanation. Usually PCS is applied for item reduction but less often for determining the components. Please explain why you considered a different approach. Any sources which references your approach?

Results:

10. Page 8, Birth MARQ analysis: The first sentence should be part of the method chapter, because it describes the selection of a analyse method

Requirement: Please restructure the end of the method and the beginning of the result chapter

11. Page 9, second paragraph: final set of items this time refers to Appendix A which describes 21 items. On page 6, the final set of times referred to the set that was administered. This is confusing, please use consistent and clear terminology for the different set of items.

12. Page 10: In the end of the first paragraph, the authors start with interpretation, which should be part of the discussion

13. General comment about the result chapter: The authors should focus on describing the results and avoiding too many explanations

Appendix A:

14. The authors indicate that some items should be reverse scored. Therefore these are the versions of the items administered to the participants, and not the final version of the birth memories and recall questionnaire.

Question: Do the authors plan a validation with the final version of the scale?
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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