Reviewer’s report

Title: Sense of coherence over time for parents with a child diagnosed with cancer

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Reviewer: Tobias Edbom

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Minor Essential Revisions

This article is an interesting article that highlights an issue that has been discussed in salutogenic research for a long time. Is SOC a state or trait? Although this study has limitations in the methodology and discussion, it is a short and relatively well-written article. The population under study is interesting because it highlights if the parents provided to manage stressors when facing a major crisis, such as their children are affected by cancer and their parents’ health is of great importance for the child’s mental health and recovery.

Some questions are now emerging in article that may need further clarification:

Background:
A thin light who need continuous work with a theoretical perspective, and the validity and reliability of the, for example, the studies which show that the SOC possibly do not measure a salutogen dimensions but rather measure of anxiety and depression (see Henje-Blom et. al 2010).

Method
It is, as the authors point out difficult to draw conclusions when there is a relatively small sample of patients and a high drop out between time point 1 and 4. I miss, however, drop out analysis of patients which did not choose to participate in the study related to the different index groups.

Results
The main problem of this study is the large drop out between time between time point 1 and 4, about 50%. Which makes the study’s lead question difficult to answer, although the authors find statistically significant differences, suggesting that the material still holds for analysis.

Discussion
Some requiring revision. Overall gaps in what may explain the differences in SOC, with respect to parental morbidity such as depression and anxiety. The authors also needs to discuss the importance of dropouts and why, despite a number of studies questioning the usefulness of a breakdown of SOC in comprehensible, manageable and meaningfulness.
Conclusion
An exciting and interesting study which primarily has its strength in the longitudinal design but needs some revision to be published.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.