Reviewer's report

Title: Assessing medically unexplained symptoms: Evaluation of a shortened version of the SOMS for use in primary care

Version: 3 Date: 30 March 2010

Reviewer: Jose Pais Ribeiro

Reviewer's report:

1-Major Compulsory Revisions-
When describe the questionnaire it is helpful to say how patients answer (like answering in a yes/no option). The two references from the original version, authors say "Subjects were asked whether they had experienced the listed physical symptoms during the last 2 years" or “the answer “Yes” means: the symptom has been present during the 2 years prior to admission; a sufficient medical explanation has not been obtained; and the patient feels strongly disturbed by the respective symptom”.
Because there are more forms to answer, it seems important to report that it is a yes or not, or to say something similar to the original version

2-Discretionary Revisions-
Cronbach alpha can be viewed as an extension of the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, which is the measure's equivalent for dichotomous items. Cronbach's alpha is the average correlation of items in an instrument to gauge its reliability, reason why it seems appropriate does not use the term Cronbach alpha, but reliability. However the original authors describe it as Cronbach alpha, reason way it seems acceptable to leave like this

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.