Reviewer's report

Title: Risk Factors for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms Among Deployed US Male Marines

Version: 2 Date: 25 February 2010

Reviewer: Thomas Ehring

Reviewer's report:

The authors have generally been responsive to the reviewers’ comments and I think that the manuscript is much improved. I have a few remaining comments.

*Major compulsory revisions

(1) Most predictor variables were assessed with single items of unknown psychometric properties (see also my second comment to the original manuscript). I still think that this is a serious limitation of the study that should be clearly acknowledged and receive some attention in the discussion. Although the authors write in their response to the reviewers that they have added this limitation to the discussion, I can’t find a passage about this issue in the manuscript.

*Minor compulsory revisions

(2) I still think that the term ‘PTSD symptoms’ in the title, tables and throughout the manuscript is misleading. For example, in the abstract the authors write that “10.8% screened positive for postdeployment PTSD symptoms”. I assume that more than 10% of the sample had PTSD symptoms of some sort. In addition, the term does not accurately capture the dependent variable in the regression analyses, which was not a continuous PTSD symptom severity score but PTSD group status established by a PCL cutoff. I appreciate the authors’ argument that the PCL does not allow to formally diagnose PTSD. However, I am wondering whether a term such as ‘probable PTSD’ or ‘clinically-relevant PTSD symptoms’ would be more appropriate than simply ‘PTSD symptoms’.

(3) Responding to my earlier suggestion to report goodness-of-fit data, the authors provide this information in their response to reviewers. Please also add this information to the manuscript.

(4) As detailed in my first comment on the original manuscript, I think that the current study mainly replicates well-known findings rather than adding a truly new piece of information to the literature. The authors’ response to my earlier comment suggests that they have a different view on how their study relates to earlier research. In my opinion, the manuscript would benefit from a more explicit attention to this issue in the introduction. What is the relevance of the current study and in what aspects does it go beyond earlier findings?

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.