Reviewer's report

Title: Do general practitioners and psychiatrists agree about defining cure from depression? The DESCRIBE survey

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Reviewer: Roland Mergl

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The authors analysed attitudes of Belgian psychiatrists and general practitioners towards depressive disorders and addressed the question whether they have an influence on prescribing patterns or outcome dimensions. The latter was the case, especially in general practitioners.

Overall, this article represents a valuable contribution to a clinically relevant research question. The presentation is clear. My comments can be summarized as follows:

Major compulsory revisions

1. Methods – Statistical analysis: The factor analysis mentioned at page 8 (line 12) should be specified. Did the authors conduct a mean component analysis with varimax rotation?

2. Results – Physicians’ attitudes about depression: In the first paragraph, a number of associations are listed, but the corresponding correlation coefficients and p values are not mentioned. This information will be important to assess the strength of the associations between DAS statements.

3. Results – Factor analysis of the DAS responses: It would be interesting to know the proportions of variance which can be explained by the three-factor solution (mentioned at page 11, line 22) and the five-factor solution (mentioned at page 12, line 4), respectively.

4. Results – Physician attitudes about depression and prescribing patterns: “The overall correlation between GPs’ perceptions and their prescribing behaviour” should be specified.

5. Table 5: By which test have the differences between the physician groups in the proportion of physicians who agreed with different Depression Attitude Scale statements been tested for statistical significance? Did the authors use a chi-square test for two-by-two tables?

6. Table 6: The highest scoring statement in the factor 3 solution (for general practitioners) seems to be A16 (55), not A14 (44).

7. Discussion: Page 17, lines 3-4: “GPs feel that most depressive disorders seen in general practice improve without medication (Factor 3)”. This sentence does not fit well to the statement that compared “with psychiatrists, GPs agree less strongly that most depressive disorders seen in general practice improve without medication” (page 12, lines 18-19). This discrepancy should be explained.
Minor essential revisions
None.

Minor issues not for publication:
1) Page 16, line 16: “A second finding of this study was the important differences […]”: Please substitute “was” by “were”.
2) Table 5: Statement A20: “If psychotherapy were freely available”: Please substitute “were” by “was”.

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.