Reviewer's report

Title: Discriminant and Concurrent Validity of a Simplified DSM-Based Structured Diagnostic Instrument for the Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Youth and Young Adults

Version: 1 Date: 13 July 2011

Reviewer: Richard Perry

Reviewer's report:

The authors are addressing a need to develop more tools to diagnose autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) in a timely, cost-efficient way. One often gets the impression from the literature that a proper diagnosis of an ASD requires hours of testing administered by different disciplines. That this is too costly for most people and insurance would not cover much of it leads to delays of diagnosis.

This new diagnostic tool seems to be a good instrument that can lead to a diagnosis in a timely fashion but as with all these tools, it will be more accurate in the hands of more experienced people and in the hands of the least trained, it will at least serve as a screening tool.

One may be surprised to see that the DSM-III R is the criteria used for diagnosis and I think that the authors should be explicit about why it was used rather than having the readers guess as to why it was used. Also, whereas it states explicitly that the autistic individuals were interviewed by a clinician, that is not stated for those diagnosed with ADHD. I think that if this is so it should be addressed.

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