Reviewer’s report

Title: Hypochondriacal attitudes comprise heterogeneous non-illness-related cognitions

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Reviewer: eric rassin

Reviewer’s report:

The current manuscript describes a single study on the association between non-clinical biases, cognitions (e.g., lack of mere exposure/ warm glow; social anxiety) on the one hand, and hypochondriacal complaints on the other. The study is generally well-written and easy to follow. In order of perceived urgency, I have the following concerns.

Major revisions:

1. The contribution of the study appears modest. That is, in the introduction, it is argued that it is already known that social fear, low esteem, and lack of warm glow are correlated with hypochondriasis. Merely, the present study tested the independency of the three predictors. This does not seem to deliver a shocking new insight.

2. The authors display a few lines of argument that are alien to me. For example, where do the three predictors come from? Are there other potential variables such as obsession proneness or magical thinking? Please justify better why the presented variables were selected. Related to this: is social anxiety truly a non-clinical variable comparable to lack of warm glow? Why limit sample size (see under Participants) to suppress significance of irrelevant associations, but at the same time increase the number of Chinese characters to obtain more variance (and hence better chance of obtaining desired correlations?)? Please explain further that these choices are truly well thought-through. Perhaps included power analyses? Is the sample truly “more representative” due to inclusion of some non-student participants? Or does this imply necessity of comparing students with non-students? Finally, the post-hoc measurement of familiarity with the Chinese symbols may be problematic. Perhaps the familiarity rating is an artifact of the procedure (e.g., participants may have rated symbols at which they stared longer as more familiar in hindsight).

Minor revisions:

3. I understand that group comparison may be considered more attractive than correlations, but this may not be the best motive to replace correlational analyses by t-tests.

Discretionary revision:

4. In the beginning of the discussion section: social fear is not a cognitive bias in the strict sense. Finally, the interpretation of the findings in the first paragraph is
quite speculative given the correlational design.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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