Author's response to reviews

Title: Psychometric properties of the Cardiac Depression Scale in patients with coronary heart disease

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Professor Majithia,

I am enclosing the revised version of the manuscript entitled ‘Psychometric properties of the Cardiac Depression Scale in patients with coronary heart disease’ including all the revisions made to this manuscript suggested by the reviewer listed in the reviewer’s report Version 2 dated 5th November, 2012. I have listed the changes made to the manuscript below. We hope the manuscript will now be considered for publication in the BMC Psychiatry journal.

Yours sincerely,

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Major Compulsory Revisions:

1) The authors have not adequately responded to the major compulsory revisions, particularly Major Compulsory Revisions 1 from Reviewer 1. The last sentence of the results still states the “CDS was more sensitive”.

2) The alternative possibility of the CDS over-diagnosing severe depression also needs to be considered in the discussion.

We have amended the last sentence of the results section. We have also amended sections of paper which discuss the specificity and selected threshold of the test. We have also added a sentence in the discussion stating that our results may be due to the alternative possibility of the CDS over-diagnosing severe depression.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1) P-values cannot equal to zero although statistical software may round as such. Please replace p = 0.000 to <0.001. In Table 3, please drop statistical test for BDI-II since the BDI threshold was used to define the two groups.

We have replaced p = 0.000 to <0.001. We have also amended Table 3 to omit the reporting of the statistical test for the BDI-II.

2) Limitations section: The phrase ‘external validity’ is misused. The authors could simply replace “to provide external validity” with “to validate”. This limitation is crucial and discussion of which should be further established. We are really not able to evaluate the sensitivity or specificity of the CDS in the study in any meaningful way. We do not know if the CDS is more sensitive as the authors note or is yielding more false positives (which do not improve sensitivity) or, more likely, what combination thereof. Please render this explicit for the reader. In the introduction, the authors discuss how the CDS may be more specific. The data does not test this and, in fact, might suggest otherwise.

We have now replaced “to provide external validity” with “to validate” in the manuscript.

We have also included a statement about the current study not being able to evaluate the sensitivity or specificity of the CDS in a fully meaningful way and that we do not know if the CDS is a more sensitive measure or is yielding more false positives as the reviewer has suggested.
3) In line with the limitations discussed herein, the last sentence of the conclusions should be toned down. The authors showed that the CDS generally correlates with some depression anxiety measures and that it has been administered in a new population. However, they should be reluctant to assume this study fully validates the measures.

We have amended the last sentence of the conclusions section.

Discretionary Revisions:

1) The discussion of the results of the factor analysis should be shortened.

We have now shortened the discussion of the factor analysis results.