Reviewer’s report

Title: Emotional but not physical maltreatment is independently related to psychopathology in socially anxious subjects: a web-based Internet survey

Version: 1 Date: 30 December 2011

Reviewer: Mostafa amr

Reviewer’s report:

Overall:
The primary objective of the reviewed manuscript was to examine the association between emotional maltreatment, including parental emotional maltreatment as well as emotional peer victimization, and social anxiety symptoms in socially anxious subjects. The study was conducted with a sound statistical analysis as a web-based Internet survey of participants and the assessment included measures of child maltreatment, emotional peer victimization, social anxiety symptoms and general psychopathology. Findings from the study demonstrated that parental emotional maltreatment and emotional peer victimization were independently related to social anxiety and mediated the impact of physical and sexual maltreatment. While the reviewed manuscript offers some interesting clinical information regarding the population under study, I am concerned about the degree to which it can add to the extant information concerning the role of abuse in SAD. There are no major compulsory comments but only minor ones that should be addressed.

Introduction:

1. In general, I felt that additional information should be included in the introduction. The manuscript would be strengthened considerably by going into more detail about previous studies of social phobia emotional abuse and its definition and how the authors’ build upon previous work in the German population. The authors provide some detail in the Discussion regarding these studies, but I recommend providing this information in the Introduction.

Methods:

1. The authors could provide a richer descriptions of their participants and methods. Are they all German. Does they belong to certain areas or they are uniformly distributed, their age, level of education and duration of their symptoms of social phobia, only the gender is mentioned, do you expect that these demographic variables may play a role in mediating the effect of emotional abuse on physical abuse and its role in Psychopathology.

2. The authors used the German version of the CTQ as their primary outcome measure. They should provide additional information regarding the reliability and validity data from prior research and the current sample.
Discussion:

1. The paragraph (1) did not appear to make sense in the start of the Discussion and should be delayed to the end of discussion.

2. More details needs to be provided regarding the social maltreatment in paragraph 3, page 14.

3. In the results section, emotional maltreatment showed significant scores on almost all BSI scales except for summarization, what is your interpretation?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'