Reviewer's report

Title: Parental attachment in males with hyperventilation syndrome

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Reviewer: Franco Baldoni

Reviewer's report:

The article deals with the interesting field of the influence of childhood parental relations (maternal and paternal) on psychological and somatic health. In general, the topic appears well introduced and the central hypotheses are expounded in a sufficiently clear and exhaustive way. Methodology, in particular the use of Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI), validated in Chinese by the same authors, appears consistent with the goals of the study. Elaboration of data is conducted in an adequate way, their discussion appears sufficiently detailed and supported by results, and conclusions are sufficiently balanced.

Despite this, some changes are necessary:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) The title appears inaccurate and incomplete. It refers to Hyperventilation Syndrome only and not to Adjustment Disorder. Moreover the authors refer to "Parental Attachment", but actually Parental Bonding Representations are assessed and not the attachment style.

For example, a more appropriate title might be:

“Parental bonding in males with adjustment disorder and hyperventilation syndrome”

2) PBI is used in research on attachment, but is not a specific questionnaire for attachment style assessment. In Background and/or in Discussion it should be clear that a more in-depth assessment of attachment should be conducted with other methods (like specific self-report questionnaires or Adult Attachment Interview). Moreover, the scientific literature concerning the influence of attachment on psychological and physical health is not mentioned and it should be. For example:

Ciechanowski, P.S., Walker, E.A., Katon, W.J. e Russo, J.E.
2002 Attachment theory: a model for health care utilization and somatization, Psychosomatic Medicine, 64, pp. 660–667.

Hunter, J.J. e Maunder, R.G.
2001 Using attachment theory to understand illness behavior, General Hospital Psychiatry, 23(4), pp. 177–182.

Maunder, R.G. e Hunter, J.J.
3) The sample description is not sufficiently clear. Are the 156 (in numbers, please) male conscripts with hyperventilation all diagnosed with adjustment disorder too? Do they all have a double diagnosis? Are there no subjects with only hyperventilation syndrome without adjustment disorder? If so, it is necessary to clarify this characteristic and consider it in the discussion.

4) ANOVA data need a more in-depth description and discussion. Moreover:
4.1 - in Table 1 there are some errors in Bonferroni Post Hoc Test descriptions: ES: Maternal Protection: Hyperventilation < Control? (14.72<10.92??) Hyperventilation > Adjustment? (14.72<15.29??) Adjustment < Control? (15.29<10.92??)
The same problems for Paternal Protection and for Mental Health.

4.2 - in Results, third paragraph, the references to SEM’s Figure 1a and 1b are inverted (Fig. 1a refers to Hyperventilation, but is Adjustment Disorder and Fig. 1b to Adjustment disorder, but is Hyperventilation).

Minor Essential Revisions
1) An error in References no. 16: Differentiating major depression from adjustment disorder with depressed mood in the medical setting

Discretionary Revisions
1) Background: literature on the influences of psychological characteristics and parental relationships on Hyperventilation Syndrome and Adjustment Disorder refers to the work of only one author (Professor For-Wey Lung). More in-depth references by other authors would be useful.
2) Limitations of the study should be evidenced in more details, particularly with regard to the assessment of attachment based on the PBI only.

In conclusion, the article is of good scientific interest, well written, compliant with the scientific literature and will be published after making the suggested changes.

**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.