Reviewer's report

**Title:** Internet-delivered attention training in individuals with social anxiety disorder - a double blind randomized controlled trial

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 9 January 2012

**Reviewer:** Thomas Berger

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a very well conducted double blind randomized controlled trial on an Internet-delivered attention bias modification training. The presentation is very clear, the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards, methods are appropriate and the discussion is well balanced. In short, this timely study should be published, also because it is important to publish null results in this emerging field.

However, I have one minor but essential revision (and one discretionary revision):

Minor essential revisions:

1. In the section, "Change in Attention Bias (p.10), the authors report a measure of attention bias and they write that they followed the procedure of the Amir et al. study. However, Amir et al. included an independent measure of attention bias at pre- and postassessment (a modified version of the Posner paradigm). As far as I understand it, the authors in this study did not include such an independent measure. Instead, they estimated the attention bias from performance data in the training/treatment sessions. I do not understand how the attention bias can be estimated this way because in the treatment condition the probe was always presented at the location of the neutral face. Thus, as far as I understand ist, there is no way to measure a possible attention bias away from threat (since the probe never appeared in the position of the disgust face). This should be clarified, or this section should be dropped.

Discretionary revisions:

2. p.3: "The idea behind the treatment is the notion that cognitive biases cause pathological anxiety and that a treatment that targets the subcortical processes might be an effective treatment." Please check if "subcortical" is the right term here ("cortical" processes may also be involved; in short, I would not refer to brain structures here)

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.