Reviewer’s report

Title: Cardiac Vagal Control and Theoretical Models of Co-occurring Depression and Anxiety: A Cross-sectional Psychophysiological Study of Community Elderly

Version: 1 Date: 7 February 2012

Reviewer: Colin Martin

Reviewer’s report:

Dear Authors

Thank you very much for the opportunity to see your very interesting and engaging paper. My suggestions for revision are below:

Page. 5. A little more detail of the concept of neuroticism within the context of the tripartite model would be useful and also, if this still has current currency within the model contemporary literature on this model.

Page. 5&6. Please furnish a little more detail on the conceptual differences between the ‘flat’ and hierarchical models for the benefit of readers less familiar with the models to be evaluated.

Page. 8&9. Please explain CVC in greater detail, particularly with relevance to it’s application to the models derived and evaluated from the HADS.

Page. 10&11. Please explain in a little bit more detail the transformation of the HADS depression scale, the rationale for the approach taken, and later in the results section, whether the transformation was effective, perhaps with a summary statistic?

Page. 11. Please give a little more detail on the need for bootstrapping as this may be unfamiliar to a significant proportion of the readership. Some more detail on the role and relevance of indirect effects would also be useful here.

Page. 20. This is the second use of HRV as an abbreviation, please use the full term where first mentioned earlier in the manuscript.

Page. 24. I'm not entirely convinced of the statement that 'this approach answers the question as to why the effect size is modest.....' Please explain and justify further.

Other than the above, I really enjoyed your paper and the above points are for the most part for your consideration and reflection though I hope they will enhance your important paper still further.

With all good wishes.
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.