Reviewer's report

Title: Comparative psychometric analyses of the SCL-90-R and its short versions in patients with affective disorders

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Reviewer: Jochen Hardt

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Review to Prinz et al, Comparative psychometric analysis of the SCL-90-R...

The authors compare the psychometric properties of the SCL-90-R and various short forms in a sample of 2,727 inpatients with affective disorders. The paper is well planned, well written and provides adequate statistics. The conclusion is that utilizing the long version of the SCL-90-R is no longer recommended given that there are various short forms that are more economical and display better psychometric properties. Such a conclusion is well justified by the data presented.

There is not much what I should criticize here as a reviewer. However, since I carefully read the paper I may list two discretionary points for a revisions, leaving it open to the authors to consider them or not.

1) The authors mention in the introduction that they performed a similar analyses on a sample of 8581 inpatients with various mental disorders. I assume that affective disorders were among them. This raised the question on what is new in the present paper. Moreover, the data were collected between 2000 and 2003, raising additionally a suspect that the present paper is based on a sub sample of the previous one. Maybe the authors want to clearly line out why these analyses has been performed additionally and how far results go over the previously reported ones to avoid any unnecessary discussion about it being a me-too paper.

2) The case numbers in the footnote of table 2 probably stem from the previous analyses, this should be corrected. Tables 3 and 6 are without any case numbers at all, tables 4 and 5 probably display the correct ones. I could not find how the authors dealt with missing data, maybe this can be added to the methods part?

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 am the author of one of the short forms that were tested - and it did not receive a good result. However, critique was fair and I accept it.