Reviewer's report

Title: Psychosomatic syndromes and Anorexia Nervosa

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Reviewer: Angela Wagner

Reviewer's report:

This is a timely and well-written article aiming to assess psychosomatic syndromes in patients with anorexia nervosa (AN) and to evaluate if psychosomatic diagnoses could identify subgroups of AN patients by using the Diagnostic Criteria for Psychosomatic Research (DCPR). Illness denial and alexithymia were most commonly diagnosed in the sample. Three subgroups were identified: a moderate psychosomatic group (49%), a somatization group (26%), and a severe psychosomatic group (25%). The authors argue that as psychosomatic diagnoses correlated differently with severity of eating symptomatology and duration of illness, DCPR could be effective to achieve tailored treatments in AN.

The manuscript is well organized and uses state of the art methods to address a topic of considerable clinical relevance in the field of eating disorders. However, some issues should be addressed.

A major limitation of the study is the lack of a control sample of any kind (healthy or other clinical sample). However, adding some information on existing literature could be helpful and could put findings into perspective. A study by Mangelli (Psychosomatics 2006) for example, found that 59% of subjects received at least one DCPR diagnosis in a community sample, naming alexithymia also among the most common.

The study sample included more AN-R than AN-BP patients which should be mentioned in the limitations as authors state distributions of clusters which still seemed to be related to classical ED sub-types.

In the eating disorder field a few studies have tried to identify personality trait-based clusters in eating disorder samples to distinguish from the classical subtypes of eating disorders (inhibited versus disinhibited/impulsive type). It would be of interest to get some information on how this would fit in the authors model of the three clusters, especially as they have collected TCI data on all subjects.

The authors do not clearly state how their findings could be translated into more effective clinical treatments, which should be described in more detail.

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.