Reviewer's report

Title: Reliability and validity of the Sheehan Disability Scale modified for pathological gambling

Version: 2 Date: 10 April 2013

Reviewer: Jeremiah Weinstock

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript reports a psychometric evaluation of a commonly used tool to assess functional impairment in three domains that is being adapted for use with pathological gamblers and for use over the telephone. The author finds that the Sheehan Disability Scale – Gambling (SDS-G) has adequate reliability for a three item measure and acceptable concurrent validity with other measures of gambling, including problem severity, behavior, and self-efficacy.

Overall, the manuscript is well written and concise. The methods employed and data generated are well defined and appropriate for the research question. One strength of the manuscript is the sample size. It is more than adequate and provides the opportunity to assess if the measure is sensitive to change over time. The author provides a strong introduction to the literature, reports data in a manner consistent with relevant standards, and a balanced discussion that identifies current limitations and future research directions. The following is offered as constructive feedback for the author:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The timeframe of the SDS-G is discordant with the gambling behavior variables (i.e., past month vs. past three months) and appears to be easily remedied as it was assessed via the Timeline Followback. Presenting correlations of the SDS-G in relation to past month gambling behavior will provide a more accurate assessment of concurrent validity.

2. In the Introduction please briefly discuss the advantages of the SDS-G in relation to another commonly used treatment outcome measure, the Addiction Severity Index, which assesses functioning in domains that overlap with the SDS-G.

3. The wording of the SDS was changed in this study such that on the scale, a 10 was paired with “severely” instead of “extremely,” which is the typical anchor word for the measure. Is there rationale for this change? How might this wording change affect (if at all) the use and interpretation of this measure.

Minor Essential Revisions

4. Table 1 – Please be consistent in number digits to which scores are reported. Total score is to one digit and the other scores are to two digits.

5. Table 2 – The n's reported for the six and twelve month evaluations are
inconsistent with the sample sizes reported on page 8.

6. Table 2 – To improve clarity please label the last column “SDS-G Total”.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance 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.