Reviewer’s report

Title: Coping, Adaptation, and Perceived Risk to Children: A Survey of Parents Affected with Bipolar Disorder

Version: 1 Date: 4 March 2013

Reviewer: Jonathan Espie

Reviewer’s report:

1. Consider omitting coping from title as it is not a dependent variable (discretionary)

2. Abstract is long, consider condensing e.g. omitting first sentence. (discretionary)

3. Results section in abstract could be condensed for brevity. However the addition of the direction of correlation would be informative. (discretionary)

4. In results section in abstract, data can inform interventions for parents with BPD rather than individuals with BPD as it is not clear that results are generalisable in this way. (discretionary)

5. As ‘adaptation’ is only measured by self report it may be better introduced as subjective adaptation. (discretionary)

6. Last sentence of first paragraph under ‘justification’ is confusing, could be beneficial to clarify what ‘negative factors’ refer to (predictors of symptom remission?). (discretionary)

7. Second paragraph under ‘justification’, first sentence, contributing factor to what? Well being or negative symptoms? (discretionary)

8. On page 6 it would be helpful to know the working definition of ‘well-being’ in the study and how this might differ from ‘quality of life’. (discretionary)

9. It would be helpful to elucidate whether coping and adaptation are entirely separate variables, given that it is mentioned that aspects of coping are measured when measuring adaptation using self-report. (minor essential revision)

10. It is helpful that the final paragraph in the background section sets out the scope of the investigation. However, it appears that coping and adaptation are set out as dependant variables when in the method section coping is given as a predictor variable. Also, I wondered if there had been a directional hypothesis on the effect of ‘living with’ BPD on the dependent/outcome variables (minor essential revision)

11. On page 8, it is helpful that measures used are referenced, however it would
be helpful to be clear about whether satisfactory validity and reliability have been previously established in the references given, as well as the info given about reliability in the current sample. (discretionary)

12. Later it is mentioned that some measures have not been validated for use in studies using a population with mental illness. It would be helpful to clarify this here, in relation to each measure. (discretionary)

13. Why are 2 measures of illness perceptions used? (minor compulsory revision)

14. I was left unclear about whether a correction for multiple analyses had been applied. (discretionary)

15. In results/discussion section I was unclear whether it was a new finding that coping tended to be active/social OR blame/denial in character. This is interesting and maybe worthy of more discussion. (discretionary)

16. In limitations section there is no comment about whether the sample was representative of the population of bipolar parents. Sampling bias may be operating as there is a preponderance of mother rather than fathers, despite an more equal gender split being found in bipolar disorder (Kendell and Zealley, 1993). A lack of racial diversity also. (major compulsory revision)

17. Table 3. If there were information about clinical ranges for scores or scores expected in normal population, this would help the reader interpret this information. (discretionary)

18. In discussion it would be interesting to hear consideration of why particular variables were predictors rather than outcomes e.g. could coping also be construed as an outcome? (discretionary)

19. I would be interested in the author’s thoughts about whether dispositional optimism is related to the concept of attributional style and the associated literature? (discretionary)

20. In the discussion or conclusions section, it would be helpful to know more about how genetic counselling could be useful or is indicated. Would the authors agree that risk perceptions evident in this sample are realistic and show a strength in the appraisals in this area? (discretionary)

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.