Reviewer's report

Title: Excess Risk of Chronic Physical Conditions Associated with Depression and Anxiety

Version: 1 Date: 25 May 2013

Reviewer: Jonathan Shaffer

Reviewer's report:

I thank the authors for responding to my comments and those of the other reviewers. The manuscript is substantially improved. Nonetheless, one major and some minor limitations remain that warrant attention.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors discuss the possible role of psychotropic medication in the observed associations between anxiety/depression and chronic health conditions. In their Response to Reviewers and limitations section, they note that they did not consider psychotropic medication use in their analyses given the possibility of multicollinearity. In the absence of evidence to support this statement, this reviewer is not convinced that multicollinearity poses a substantial problem given that many individuals with depression or anxiety do not take medications for these conditions and many of the those who use these medications may not qualify for a diagnosis of depression/anxiety given that their symptoms are controlled. As such, the authors should at least report the association between their four-category anxiety/depression primary variable and data on the use of various psychotropics to which they may have access. If multicollinearity is not substantial (e.g., a correlation of < 0.6), the authors should consider controlling for medication use.

Minor Essential Revisions

The following sentence on page 6 of the Introduction section requires clarification: "We were specifically interested in examining whether depression and/or anxiety was independently associated with these seven chronic conditions, given that the lifestyle risk factors have been known to increase the risk for these chronic conditions [35]."

The authors should please provide the reference for the following statement on page 8 of their Methods: "The cross-walk file between ICD-9 CM codes and clinical classification codes are published."

The authors should report exact p-values between 0.01 and 0.05 as well as test statistics given that these data may be essential to subsequent meta-analyses and other systematic reviews.

The authors’ response to reviewers indicates that they tempered their recommendation regarding the need for routine screening for common mental
health disorders. Their statement about routine screening on page 14 is still quite strong, does not follow directly from their data, and requires further consideration. Routine screening may have a number of limitations if coordinated care is not implemented first and/or if their mental health providers are not available to follow-up with patients who screen positive. The authors' language regarding this recommendation thus requires further revision or consideration of these limitations.

On page 15, the authors identify "recall-bias" as a limitation of their self-reported data. It may be more appropriate for the authors to acknowledge "reporting bias" more generally as a limitation, given that recall bias is only one form of reporting bias.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.