Reviewer’s report

Title: Standardization of the Colombian Version of the PHQ-4 in the general population

Version: 2  Date: 19 May 2014

Reviewer: Friederike Kendel

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting study providing normative data for the Columbian population and assessing the construct validity and factorial structure of the PHQ-4 in the general population. Methods and results are presented in a diligent and comprehensive manner. Listed below are a few major points. The comments are not listed in order of importance, but rather in order of appearance in the manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Abstract:
1. For a better understanding, the last sentence in the abstract may explicitly refer to the “general Columbian population”.
2. It may be useful to shortly describe the methods in the abstract (one additional sentence is sufficient).

Introduction:
3. The introduction is very well written and the authors provide an interesting background. However, reference #2 does not seem appropriate to mention the 12-month prevalence of 6.7% in the U.S. At least, I could not find these numbers there. Please provide the original source.

Methods:
4. The methods are appropriate and well described. One question pertains to P.4, line #33: The general aim of the survey should be explained.

Results:
5. p.8, line #12: What was the reason for choosing a cut-off <48 years in the paper #14? Does it make sense to transfer this cut-off to the Columbian sample?
6. Anxiety and depression are two distinct constructs. Why do the authors calculate correlations for the total PHQ-4 with the total score of the HADS? Why not differentiate the constructs anxiety and depression to assess the construct validity? In my opinion, important information is lost if doing so. I would appreciate the presentation of the subscales and information about how much variance is explained by e.g. the subscales anxiety or depression of the HADS.

Discussion:
7. The limitations are clearly stated.
8. p.9, #30 “also strongly associated” seems a bit much given the relatively small correlation of \( r = -0.29 \) for the PHQ-4 life satisfaction.

9. p.9, #31: SF-20 with 6 subscales? Is this a version of the short-form-health survey?

**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.