Reviewer's report

Title: Pre-treatment predictors of attrition in a randomised controlled trial of psychological therapy for longstanding anorexia nervosa.

Version: 1 Date: 20 December 2013

Reviewer: Martin Teufel

Reviewer's report:

The authors submitted a manuscript describing pre-treatment predictors of attrition in a RCT of psychological therapy for longstanding AN.

The topic is highly relevant. Drop-out rates in the treatment of AN are significant. In order to improve therapies for patients at risk to drop out the work provides added value.

However, some concerns and questions remain:

1. The introduction is concise. Maybe more information about drop out rates in AN could be given. (Minor Essential Revision)

2. In the methods section much information is given about the trial already published [19]. To my opinion the submitted paper is a more methodological one. Therefore, I would advise to give more information about the methods used to assess predictors (advantages, disadvantages etc.). (Major Compulsory Revision)

3. How is “completion” defined? Completion vs. Drop out vs. Attrition? This information is not given but absolutely relevant to correctly interpret the value of the findings. (Minor Essential Revision)

4. Did you distinguish between early drop-outs and late-drop outs? (Minor Essential Revision)

5. Statistical analyses: See 2. What was the level of significance set in the analysis and interpretation? Did you adjust for multiple testing? (Major Compulsory Revision)

6. The results section is to short and also for researchers in the field hard to understand. Group differences between completers and non-completers are given and shown. However, analysis of predictors as the key finding and focus of the study are actually given in a non-comprehensible way. Maybe a table or figure could help to give these results and to facilitate the understanding of results. Also values that „just failed to reach significance” should be given to understand what was done. To my opinion not only OR, but also Nagelkerkes R square should be given to get an idea of the power of the explanation of the model. (Major Compulsory Revision)

7. In the discussion section drop out rates in your study should be discussed together with drop out rates in other studies (e.g. Fairburn et al., Zipfel et al.,
Schmidt et al., Halmi et al.). The relationship between different treatment approaches and drop out rates is neglected in the discussion. What about drop-out rates in AN compared to other mental disorders? (Minor Essential Revision)

8. As I understand a worse quality of life the higher drop-out rates. If so please type somewhere a sentence indicating this clearly. AN subtype did not reach the level of significance. However you talk in the discussion about 5 predictors. Please give information about your definition of „predictor“. To my opinion group differences are not equal to predictors. In the actual version of the manuscript I only can suppose EDQoL as a predictor. Maybe R square could help you to explain your findings to the reader. (Major Compulsory Revision)

9. References: While scanning I found some mistakes (e. g. [31] several mistakes in the title; [18][27] bold vs. non-bold; use of blank characters/space). (Minor Essential Revision)

10. In Figure 1 adding the percentage could help to interpret the findings. (Discretionary Revision)

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