Author's response to reviews

Title: Measurement invariance of the depressive symptoms scale during adolescence

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer: Marjolein Verhoeven

I am generally satisfied with the changes that the authors have made in the text and their answers to my questions. I believe that the manuscript has been significantly improved and is almost ready for publication.

Thank you for reviewing our manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions

- In their response letter, the authors indicate that in the method-section they now explain how they have dealt with their longitudinal data. That is, they have incorporated the data regarding all three measurements into one model. However, I could not find this explanation in the method-section.

  On page 10, we specified that constraints were imposed ‘across time whereby all three measurements were entered into one model’. In addition, on page 11, we re-iterated that the model ‘including measures at all three time points’ was invariant.

Some discretionary revisions:

- On page 5 the authors state that "the specific subscales of the DSS may be stronger predictors of future specific psychopathological symptoms". Stronger than what? Why is this important to study?

  On page 5, we specified that ‘the specific subscales of the DSS may be more accurate (i.e., valid and reliable) predictors of future specific psychopathological symptoms than a global symptoms scores, and thus the probability of accurately identifying adolescents at risk of developing specific psychopathological symptoms may be increased.’

- There is a typo on page 6 (line 16-17) "If not were not, the items were translated..."

  We made the correction (i.e., ‘If the items were not available in French, they were translated by two Francophone physicians, back-translated to test the accuracy of the translation, and then pilot tested in the target group for readability and ease of comprehension.’).

- On page 12, the authors state that the latent mean factors were non-invariant at Time 2 and 3 across sex and time. Could the authors indicate what the differences were between boys and girls and over time?

  We added that girls reported higher scores on the DSS at each time point.

- On page 13, the authors indicate that they used a 4-point Likert scale for the DSS, while previous research has used a 3-point scale. What is the original response scale for the DDS? If this is not a 4-point scale, the authors should state in their method-section that they adapted the response scale for their study.
We indicated that “Participants responded to each item using a 4-point Likert scale (modified from the original 3-point scale) ranging from 1 (“never”) to 4 (“often”)’ on page 8.

- On page 14, the authors state that “the strong associations observed between the DSS subscales …indicate that these relationships are stable across samples and measures of depressive symptoms. I'm not sure I understand what is meant by this. Could the authors explain why these strong associations indicate stable relationships across samples? We deleted this sentence.

- There is a typo on page 14: "Further, it is not a requirements to test”; requirements should read requirement. We made the correction.