Author's response to reviews

Title: Disorder-specific cognitive profiles in major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
March 20, 2014

Dr Alice Murray  
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Dear Dr Alice Murray,

Please find enclosed a revised version of our manuscript ‘Disorder-specific cognitive profiles in major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder’ (MS: 1942614638994144) for your consideration for publication in *BMC Psychiatry*.

We gratefully used the valuable comments of referee 2 to improve the quality of our manuscript. A more detailed description of these changes is provided in the point-by-point reply below and marked in the manuscript in red colored text.

Overall we are pleased by, what we felt, a positive reception of our paper, and we would like to thank you and the reviewers for their time and effort put in reviewing our manuscript. We hope that this revision has brought our paper closer to meeting the standards for publication in *BMC Psychiatry*.

Yours sincerely,

Sanne Hendriks, MD
POINT BY POINT RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS COMMENTS

REVIEWER 2:

Comments:
This is a revision of a previously submitted manuscript examining cognitive factors that would distinguish between depression, GAD, and mixed depression/GAD. As noted in my previous review, this study contributes to understanding cognitive distinctions between depression and GAD, and its strengths include comparison of cognitive constructs previously found to be implicated in depression vs. GAD, specifically, comparison of “pure” depression and GAD to comorbid depression/GAD, and the sample size. The authors have addressed the majority of the previous concerns raised, including expansion of the introduction to review additional relevant literature, with modification of the method to include further description of the sample and measures. The following are a few minor suggestions.

1. Some of the new literature introduced in the Discussion at the bottom of p. 12 and top of p. 13 could go in the introduction, and the authors can then refer back to it in the discussion.
Re: We placed some of the literature (Taylor et al., 1996; Zinbarg et al., 2001) in the Introduction and referred back to it in the Discussion.

2. On the last sentence of the first full paragraph of p. 12, “The point at which individuals become certain about both the absence of a positive...and this leads to increased symptoms of depression (e.g., suicidality).” I would suggest the authors look at a paper by Sargalska et al. (2011) in the International Journal of Cognitive Therapy, where such a question about suicidality was examined. Also, I think the wording of this sentence is very close to what was suggested in the Miranda et al., (2008) paper, which was, in turn, referencing what was suggested by Andersen and colleagues with regard to depressive predictive certainty in depression (see, e.g., Andersen, 1990). If this was taken from that work, then it should be referenced.
Re: We revised the paragraph and corrected the referencing: “It has been suggested that intolerance of uncertainty is of influence on the different paths leading to MDD or GAD. The point at which individuals become certain about both the absence of a positive future and the presence of a negative future leads to hopelessness about the future, and this leads to
increased symptoms of depression (e.g. suicidality). [Miranda et al., 2008; Abramson et al., 1989; Andersen, 1990] However, Sargalska et al. (2011) showed that only certainty about the absence of a positive future (and not the presence of a negative future) predict suicidal ideation even after adjusting for hopelessness and symptoms of depression. [Sargalska et al., 2011]

3. The authors still need to do some proofreading of the manuscript. Some examples where wording needs to be changed: p. 3, second paragraph: “Models have been developed…” should be reworded to something like, “A number of models have been developed to explain these differences. These include the cognitive content-specificity model and the tripartite model.” On p. 12, in the sentences beginning with “So it seems that rumination…” the authors should replace the two places where they say, “…stronger associated…” with “…more strongly associated…”

We proofread the manuscript and we hope we have taken away the concerns of the reviewer. Several corrections were made, for example:

Page 3, second paragraph: “A number of models have been developed to explain these differences. These include the cognitive content-specificity model, and the tripartite model.”

Page 3, second paragraph: “In the tripartite model of anxiety and depression, negative affect is proposed to be associated with both anxiety and depression, whereas lack of positive affect is associated with depression and physiological hyper-arousal is associated with anxiety.”

Page 12, first paragraph: “So it seems that rumination is oriented towards the past and is more strongly associated with depression, while worry is oriented towards the future and is more strongly associated with GAD.”

4. In the third sentence of the first paragraph, “Research in which…showed that GAD…” the word “showed” should be changed to “suggested.”

We changed this sentence: “Research in which the underlying latent structure of common psychiatric diagnoses was analysed suggested that GAD belongs to the same dimension as MDD and not to the anxiety disorder dimension.”