Author's response to reviews

Title: Psychometric properties and clinical utility of the Scale for Suicidal Ideation (SSI) in adolescents

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

We are delighted about the provisional acceptance of our paper. Here are our responses to the referees’ comments. The changes in the manuscript are with bolded text. We are happy to answer any questions or to make more corrections if required.

Referee 1 (Ekeberg):

1. There are two possibilities of describing characteristics e.g. age- and sex distribution; to put it in the methods section or to put it in the results section, and to our best knowledge the trend currently is to do it in the results-section.

2. We changed the Q1-3 figures to be with one decimal only (Results-concurrent validity-paragraph 2 and paragraph 4).

3. The referee is right; we deleted the repeating text about our 9 trained raters. (Methods - procedure).

4. Unfortunately we did not have the means to improve the quality of the figure. We hope and believe that it is comprehensible.

5. These reliabilities could not be evaluated, as they require repeated measurements of each subject that are made by different raters, or by the same rater after a brief time interval. As our study is a part of a larger project with different aims, the psychometric aspect could not be perfectly designed (Discussion-limitations-paragraph 1).

6. There was no difference in the SSI total-scores between subjects aged 13-15 and those aged 16-19 (Results-par 1).

7. The referee is right. We added the suggested speculations on the comorbid personality traits (Discussion-paragraph 3) and on the use of questionnaire only as an adjunct to clinical evaluation (Discussion-clinical implications-paragraph 2) to the manuscript text.

Referee 2 (Allan):

1. The referee is right about the fact that separate interviewers for the two instruments would have made the issue of concurrent validity stronger by reducing the cross-scale contamination. We however disagree that SSI scores are wholly reliant on the K-SADS-PL responses, and thus believe that the concurrence between them speaks for validity of the SSI. We added the speculation into limitations (Discussion-limitations-paragraph 4).

2. We added the median time interval between the SSI and the CSA into the results section.
3. We reported Chi-square scores, for the difference between all the classes. We did not report pairwise comparisons between the classes. We however reported the SSI median sum-scores in the classes, and the part of the discussion that the referee probably refers to is based on these median scores.

4. The referee is right. We tempered our statement in the limitations section (Discussion-limitations-end of paragraph 1).

Directionary revisions:

1. We changed the title.
2. We went through the notations and tried to improve them.
3. Cutoff threshold of 5/6 means that those scoring five are under the threshold and those scoring six are over the threshold. We changed this way of expressing; now it is cutoff threshold score of six or more.

On behalf of the authors,

Matti Holi