Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of the Edinburgh Post Natal Depression Scale using Rasch analysis

Version: 1 Date: 20 March 2006

Reviewer: Henri Chabrol

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This study concludes that a revised 8-item version of the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale would be psychometrically more robust. To shorten a scale while improving its psychometrics properties is useful. However, I would have prefer a more convincing demonstration.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

This article is based on Item Response Theory (IRT) which is a modern test theory. It is difficult to evaluate the relevance of the methodology given that accepted procedure constantly changes. There is no consensus among psychometricians. In the present study, the sample size can be considered as adequate. IRT typically requires large sample size. However, the IRT literature usually don’t recommend sample size as there are so many dependencies. Some experts suggest at least 250 people or more per group or greater. If you use the Rasch model, as in the present study, smaller samples size can be used. I suggest the authors mention the reservations about IRT and Rasch model expressed by many psychometricians.

The reason why the misfitting item 5 “I have felt scared or panicky for no very good reason” was not deleted is not clear to me.

To delete item 8 "I have felt sad or miserable" seems to me to reduce the face validity of the scale. I think it is not enough to show that revised cut points maintain the case identification of the original scale. It has to be demonstrated that the revised scale performed better than the original scale in the identification of clinical cases using a standardized diagnostic interview.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests