Reviewer's report

Title: Interoceptive hypersensitivity and interoceptive exposure in panic disorder: specificity and effectiveness

Version: 1 Date: 3 June 2006

Reviewer: Hiroaki Kumano

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a good paper investigating the effectiveness of interoceptive exposure for panic disorder patients. It has some strength such as the use of as many as 98 patients, a manual-based CBT program, and a standardized self-report questionnaire of fear of panic-related physical sensations.

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

1. The authors stated that the BSQ was an ordinal variable and expected to show non-normal distribution (page 6). Then why wasn't Spearman or Kendall rank correlation used instead of Pearson correlation between the BSQ factors and degree of similarity of interoceptive exposure tasks?

2. Please indicate preferably in a table form which interoceptive exposure tasks were selected by how many subjects to be included in their hierarchies of exercise and then which interoceptive exposure tasks were successful based on the reduction of fear more than 30 points for how many subjects.

3. In addition, it is not clear whether the same subjects responded positively to more than one interoceptive exposure tasks, and it is also not clear how many subjects in total responded positively to any interoceptive exposure task out of 43 (?) subjects whose records were obtained without a deficit.

4. Without information requested in #2 and #3 (apart from the necessity of control condition), you cannot conclude that the interoceptive exposure tasks have significant effect on the fear of physical sensations in the panic disorder (pages 2, 9 and 10).

5. You mentioned "In patients who exercised 'Hyperventilation" in line 9 in page 8, but you should use "In patients for whom 'Hyperventilation' was effective" or something because the patients who exercised the task and those for whom the task were effective were not the same as mentioned above. There are the same misconceived expressions throughout the manuscript (e.g. in the abstract) to be corrected.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

6. There are several errors in English expression. Please carefully correct them.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.