Reviewer's report

Title: Group Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Japanese Patients with Social Anxiety Disorder: Outcomes and Their Predictors

Version: 1 Date: 18 June 2007

Reviewer: Ronald M Rapee

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a very interesting paper reporting the effects of group CBT for a sample of people with social phobia from Japan. To my knowledge there are currently no reports of outcome of psychotherapy for social phobia from East Asia and hence this study addresses an important issue. The research is generally well conducted and the paper is clearly and competently written. There are obvious limitations in the design, but the authors have pointed these out clearly and the study provides a nice example of research from an applied, clinical setting, in a non-Western country.

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

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. At the outset the authors report the prevalence of social phobia. It seems to me that this is a report of Western prevalence and yet prevalence in East Asia appears to be considerably lower. The authors might want to report a more relevant prevalence. Then in the discussion they may wish to consider the implication of the low prevalence for studies of social phobia in Japan.
2. The main limitation to me was the fact that medication was allowed. While this has been addressed in the discussion, I think the authors need to acknowledge that taking medication means that we cannot be sure that the changes are actually due to the CBT.
3. As these authors are very well aware, social phobia in Japan can often take the form of Taijin Kyofusho. There is currently almost no report on CBT for this variation of social phobia. At the very least it would be good if the authors could report on how many of their sample may have met criteria for TKS. In addition, if they could compare outcome results for TKS vs non-TKS, this might be very interesting, regardless of which way it goes. I know that power will be too low to provide formal analyses, but even reporting of a few means might provide some data of greater interest.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I am a co-author on another paper with two of the authors of this paper.