Reviewer's report

**Title:** The importance of the concepts of disaster, catastrophe, violence, trauma and barbarism in defining posttraumatic stress disorder in clinical practice

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 7 May 2008

**Reviewer:** Jerome Endrass

**Reviewer's report:**

When assessing the work, please consider the following issues:

1. **Does the debate present a novel argument, or a novel insight into existing work?**

   The authors address the issue of problematic definitions and misconceptions in the field of traumatology. The principally rely on well-known literature. Their criticism of the predominant definition of PTSD in DSM and ICD cannot be interpreted as “a novel insight into existing work”. There is an ongoing debate regarding this topic.

2. **Does the debate address an important problem of interest to a broad biomedical audience?**

   The problem the authors address is quite substantial and potentially of interest for a broader audience. However, the authors chose to address various concepts, that might be too specific for a broader audience. Especially the focus on solely psychodynamic concepts is not broad enough and might produce a distorted image of the current scientific literature in the field.

3. **Is the piece well argued and referenced?**

   The piece is well and carefully argued. The principal problem of the article does not lie in the argumentation but in the choice of the material. By focusing on primarily theoretical (and to some extend outdated) material, the reasoning of this article is somehow inconclusive.

4. **Has the author used logical arguments and sound reasoning?**

   The authors use logical arguments and sound reasoning.

5. **Is the piece written well enough for publication?** (nb. Since we do not charge for access to published research, we cannot undertake the costs of editing poorly written manuscript. If you tell us that the writing is not acceptable for publication, we will ask the authors to find someone, or an editing service, to help them rewrite it. If you tell us that the manuscript is too poorly written for it to be peer reviewed, we will ask them to rewrite it now.)

   I am not a native English speaker, hence my comments in this matter have to be
dealt with caution, but I do believe, that the piece is well enough written for publication.

Please make your review as constructive and detailed as possible in your comments so that authors have the opportunity to overcome any serious deficiencies that you find and please also divide your comments into the following categories:

- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

  None

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

  None

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

  The authors have to cover a broader range of literature. Since this is “only” a theoretical work, the reader would like to know, what was the reason to choose the present articles. Did the authors e.g. use certain keywords in some database such as pubmed? Also, it is questionable, whether criticizing the diagnostic criteria in ICD and DSM is relevant. The reader might be more interested in the impact on treatment and research of a potential new definition.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests