Reviewer’s report

Title: Explaining gender differences in non-fatal suicidal behaviour among adolescents: a population-based study

Version: 2  Date: 13 July 2011

Reviewer: Susan Rasmussen

Reviewer’s report:

Discretionary revisions:

Firstly, can I thank the authors for responding in such detail to the previous comments. I very much enjoyed reading the revised manuscript. However, with the addition of the extra information following the initial review, I have a few suggestions for rewording which might aid the readability of the paper. In addition, and I thank the authors for addressing this issue in their letter, I still feel that the lack of questions tapping into the motivation and intention of the behaviour should at least be acknowledged as a limitation at the end of the paper to help readers interpret the findings.

1. Page 2, 2nd line; move ‘also’ to after ‘suicidal behaviour is’
2. Page 3, line 11: remove the word ‘even’ from the sentence beginning “results from a systematic review….”
3. Page 3, line 23: insert the word ‘have’ after “many epidemiological studies so far”
4. Page 3, 2nd last line: change “psychopathological behaviour” to say “psychopathological behaviours”
5. Page 4, 1st line: change the sentence saying “there is only little empirical research about the reasons…” to say “there is only little empirical research which investigates the reasons…”
6. Page 5, line 9 of the assessment section: change the word ‘has’ to ‘was’ in the sentence starting “a separate question on self-harm…”
7. Page 5, line 16 of the assessment section: change the following sentence “This self-report scale..” to say “this self-report questionnaire..”
8. Page 7, second paragraph: this sentence which is rather confusing and needs to be rewritten as it is not entirely clear what message the authors is trying to get across: “the information explained by gender in addition to the emotional and behavioural problems is with 0.3% (model 3) again without practical relevance but statistically significant…”. perhaps it would be better to say something along the lines of (if I have understood it right): “When both gender and emotional and behavioural problems are included in the model an additional .3% of variance is explained (model 3). Whilst this is a statistically significant finding, it has little practical relevance”
9. Page 7, 2nd paragraph: the sentence starting “the lack of interaction between...” please change the ‘und’ to ‘and’

10. Page 7, 3rd last line: change “...but in line with previous epidemiological research” to say “...which is in line with previous epidemiological research”

Page 8, 1st paragraph: the sentence starting “similar findings may also occur in nonsuicidal......” is slightly confusing when describing “an important role of mediating depression for repetitive self-harm” and should perhaps to be reworded to be slightly clearer

11. Page 8, line 16: remove the word ‘usually’

12. Page 8, line 17: insert a ‘to’ in between the words ‘likely’ and ‘show’

13. Page 8, 2nd line form bottom: change the word ‘could’ to ‘has’

14. Page 9, 2nd paragraph: change the sentence to say “.... Especially in internalizing problems which has been shown by some authors”

15. Page 9, 4th paragraph: change the following sentence “our results clearly demonstrate that gender alone does only explain 2.3-2.7% of the information of non-fatal suicidal behaviour...” to say “our results clearly demonstrate that gender alone only explains 2.3-2.7% of the incidence of non-fatal suicidal behaviour....”. Following from this point, the word ‘information’ could perhaps be changed to ‘incidence’ throughout this section

16. Page 10, 2nd paragraph: as this is a cross-sectional study, I’m not entirely confident with the supposition that “...girls are more likely to exhibit suicidal behaviour because they suffer from a higher rate of emotional and behavioural problems during adolescence”, and indeed the authors say this themselves a few sentences later. Perhaps this sentence could be toned down slightly.

17. Page 10, 3rd paragraph: the sentence starting “one additional problem...”: please remove the word ‘been’ after “..girls could also have”

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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