Reviewer’s report

Title: Mental Health, Duration of Unemployment, and Coping Strategy: a Cross-Sectional Study of Unemployed Migrant Workers in China during the Economic Crisis

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Reviewer: Marcia Scazufca

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Title.
The study included 210 unemployed migrant workers from the Zhejiang Province of China. The title should be more specific as it is likely that results cannot be generalized for all migrant workers (approximately 20 million) in China. The description of the objectives and discussion also need to be more specific regarding the study sample.

Introduction.
The justification of using a cross-sectional study was included in the introduction section (“forth specific effort”, page 6). It should be in the method section.

Research questions (page 7):
1. It is unlikely that mental health problems did not exist at all “in the unemployed migrant workers in China during the economic crisis”. I suppose the first research question should be written as something like “What was the frequency of mental health problems among….?”

2. The study has a cross-sectional design. For this reason we do not know if workers’ coping strategies or mental health status changed with unemployment. Therefore the study examined associations between variables and not “influence” (see second, third and fourth objectives).

Methods.
Second paragraph (page 7) describes the sample and should be in the results section.

Job characteristics (i.e. type or duration of last job) may have an association with mental health status during unemployment. Have you collected such information? If not, is it a possible limitation of the present study?

Why duration of unemployment was only used in the analyses as a binary variable (short or long-term) (page 8)? Has the information about the exact period of unemployment been collected? Does it make sense to include migrant workers that have been unemployed for a very short period (say 1 week)? It is
likely that mental health problems among these workers are not related at all to unemployment? What do you think?

Unemployed migrant workers were identified from “two biggest labor markets in two cities…” (page 9). It seems that migrant workers that moved back to rural areas or those who were still living in the city but were not looking for jobs (i.e. those extremely depressed) were not included. What are the implications of the selection criteria to the generability of results?

How the sample size was calculated?

How the workers were approached and invited to participate in the study? How selection bias was avoided?

What do the authors mean by “a token of appreciation”?

Main characteristics of the study (ref 45) should be described on the method section.

Discussion.

What are the limitations of the present study?

**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:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests