Reviewer's report

Title: "The investigation of stressful life events as significant predictors on depressive symptoms among Cypriot University students: a cross-sectional descriptive correlational study"

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Reviewer: Miguel Roca

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript describes a cross-sectional descriptive correlational study among undergraduate students using the CES-D and the LESS scales. The paper is well written and organized. The response rate is very high (85%).

Major compulsory revisions

To study the prevalence of depressive symptoms in a large sample of young population is not an original topic and this is the major problem of the manuscript. The association between depression and stressful life events has been established and the role of stress life events in first onset and recurrences is a controversial perspective of research. In fact, little conceptual attention has been paid to the level of severity of stressful events, the studies typically involving only “major” events as deaths of significant others or serious illness.

The second major concern is the use of the LESS scale and this concern needs to be included at the limitations section: lack of accuracy of the scale and that it doesn’t take into account the individual’s personality, their perception of how difficult the stressor is, nor does it take into account how long the stressor continues for. It is known that the longer a stressor continues, then the more likely it is to cause stress and that the individuals perception of an event is the key to whether they will find a situation stressful or not. For some authors, 12-months period is a longer period to recall and consider the self-reported severity of stressful life events.

Third, the authors need to discuss the relation of the results with the models between stressful life events and depression. Could the authors give us some ideas of their results regarding the “kindling” hypothesis (the first episode of a mood disorder is more likely to be preceded by life stress events suggesting a progressive decline as a function of the longitudinal course of illness)?

Finally, what is the impact of the result for prevention strategies to manage life stressful events in young people?

Minor essential revisions

-The academic precedence of the students is not relevant and can help to reduce the size and to improve the quality of the tables.
The use of the number of self-reported stressful life events (36) at the abstract is confusing, due the reference number of the bibliography.

**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 have no competing interests