Reviewer's report

Title: Frequencies of child maltreatment in a representative sample of the German population

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Reviewer: lijing ouyang

Reviewer's report:

The authors provided prevalence of five types of child maltreatment (emotional, physical, and sexual) based on a cross-sectional survey aiming to be representative of the German general population. They used previously validated threshold values for child maltreatment and found lower rates of child maltreatment than other reports.

The response rate of the survey is 56% and there is no way to compare responders and non-responders. This is a major limitation that casts doubt on the representativeness of the numbers.

The paper calculates prevalence of child maltreatment based on previously validated threshold values from a sample of U.S. female health plan participants in the 90s. It is not clear whether the threshold values are still valid in a different setting and different era.

It is not clear how their methods/numbers is an improvement to previous reports except for the fact that they reported emotional maltreatment in Germany.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. The major point to re-calculate the prevalence of child maltreatment was to use empirically determined and validated threshold values from Walker et al. So it is important to give summary description of how the cut-off values were calculated and validated and why the authors believe they are superior to other methods, which is lacking in the current paper.

Minor Essential Revisions
2. The discussion has several long paragraphs comparing prevalence numbers with previous literature. The information can be summarized using a table and will be more readable.

Discretionary Revisions
3. It will be interesting to validate the cut-off values using a German sample, which can be mentioned as future research.

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.