Reviewer's report

Title: Positive versus negative mental health in emerging adulthood: A national cross-sectional survey

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Reviewer: Helen Winefield

Reviewer's report:

The paper is clearly written and the research question is a topical one which is addressed using appropriate methods in a large sample. The authors discuss the background literature and the limitations of their study competently, and make useful suggestions for future research.

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  None

- Minor Essential Revisions
  There are a few mistakes in the English expression, which although minor, damage the readability:
  1. p.9, plural is indices, not indexes
  2. p. 10, "contrarily" should be "in contrast"
  3. p.11, "extincted" is not a word. Perhaps use "extinguished". Or say the differences disappeared.
  4. p. 11, 2nd to last line: say "being aged between 16-29 years"

- Discretionary Revisions
  5. It seems to me that the conclusion (p.16) that it is still an open question whether GHQ captures two dimensions of mental health, is rather weak given the data. The clear clustering of positively vs negatively worded items suggests to me that the factor analysis results do not convincingly reflect bi-dimensionality, but are indeed an artefact of the wording. That is supported by the analyses of associations between PMH and NMH and the potential predictors of health. A stronger concluding statement about the apparent unidimensionality of the mental health concept would therefore be appropriate.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
**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.