Author's response to reviews

Title: The psychometric properties of the AUDIT. A survey of a random sample of an elderly Swedish population.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editor

Thanks for the opportunity to revise the manuscript. We have now made changes to the manuscript MS: 1268671019118010

“The psychometric properties of the AUDIT. A survey of a random sample of an elderly Swedish population”. The changes are listed below point-by-point and are tracked in the manuscript.

Reviewer 1

Major compulsory Revisions

1. “No justification has been given as to why they have defined the elderly population as those aged 79-80”? In retrospect we find the limited age span 79-80 a limitation of the study and this is mentioned in the discussion.

2. “Why has the comparison been made with 17-71 year olds”? Our data did not allow a fine stratification on age for the control group. This is also mentioned as a limitation in the discussion. The term "younger people" is indeed misleading and was removed.

3. “More detail needs to be provided as to what the statistical technique is being used for.” The aim of the statistical analyses we used was explained in the statistics section. The link between the used statistical procedures and the aims of our study was clarified in the statistics section.

4. The sample size of the comparison group was provided in "Participants". The procedure for data collection was identical in the two surveys and this was pointed out in the text under headline “Design” as well as the response rates.

5. We elaborated on the limitations section including the narrow age span and dropout

Minor essential revisions

1. The typo “Introduktion” was changed to “Introduction”
2. Table 3 refers to the older sample and this was clarified in the table
3. A short description of audit-c was provided when first mentioned
4. Tables 1, 2, and 3 now have Ns in the headings

Minor discretionary reviews

We made no special effort to test the AUDIT-5 but we do not believe that our data give particular support for the validity of AUDIT-5. Hence, this short form was only mentioned in the introduction.
Reviewer 2,

Major essential revisions

1. “Include a table which outlines the characteristics of the samples used in the paper” The only demographic characteristic that we have on our subjects are age and gender. Hence, we described the sample in text rather than in a table.

2. In these times of aging populations we do not find 65 year olds to be considered elderly. However, as mentioned earlier we also find the term "younger people" misleading and it was removed.

3. We have no reason to believe that the factor structure is different between men and women but we know for a fact that the levels differ. This motivates the stratification on gender in table 3. The actual sample was clarified in the Table 3 heading. We think the report of mean scores on AUDIT is the conventional norm and kept it rather than median scores. The comparison of audit and audit-c was not an aim of our study.

4. Our analyses are based on the total samples including both drinkers and abstainers and this was clarified in the "Participants section".

5. We concur with the reviewer on this - our results show that audit has limitations regarding factor structure and internal consistency among the elderly and we adapted the manuscript to this.

Minor essential revisions

6. yes...the wording was changed to risky
7. yes...it now reads "introduction"
8. the reference is now at place
9. we think that the audit is such a well known instrument and the easy to retrieve. Hence, we did not include the actual questions in a table but provide a reference.
10. the changed this through out the ms
11. the extra "(" and ")" were removed on p3
12. multiple items were refered in plural in the introduction
13. the statement on the dropout analysis is toned down
14. the year of the data collection was provided in the text
15. factor loadings below |0.4| (an arbitrary limit) means that the item correlates poorly with the factor and excluding these loadings makes the reading easier. this was explained in the text.
16. missing data were excluded listwise and no imputation was made. this was clarified in the methods
17. the fit indices ranged from poor to acceptable. however, as we did not allow for correlated error terms some easy steps could have improved the fit of our models but made comparisons more difficult between models. Our main point here is that the models fit worse among the elderly
18. the exact response rate is now provided in the abstract
19. see response to (9)
20. the number of responders in wave 3 was too low to admit any serious comparison and hence we omitted this.

We hope that these revisions made the manuscript publishable in BMC Public health.

Sincerely

Håkan Källmén