Reviewer's report

Title: Variability in depression prevalence in early rheumatoid arthritis: A comparison of the CES-D and HAD-D Scales

Version: 1 Date: 21 October 2008

Reviewer: Sarah Dean

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Variability in depression prevalence in early rheumatoid arthritis: a comparison of the CES-D and HAD-D Scales.

Thank you for asking me to re-review this paper. My review is based on the assessing guidelines provided by the journal.

1) Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   Yes

2) Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   Yes

3) Are the data sound and well controlled?
   Yes

4) Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes

5) Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Yes

6) Do the title and abstract clearly convey what has been found?
   Yes.

7) Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

Summary

This is a clearly argued and described paper and my suggestions for revision relate to minor points of clarification and detail. Thank you.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision
on publication can be reached)

None

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1) Page 7: write out full meaning of DMARD and is there a supportive reference for this protocol?
2) Page 8, first paragraph, there is no close brackets.
3) Page 8 sentence about meaning of significant Chi-Square – please clarify if deviation from the model means ‘poor fit’.
4) Page 9 second sentence, again please clarify that ‘fit to model’ means a ‘good fit’. In both these instances I think a judgment statement (poor, good) helps to clarify the point being made.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

5) Page 6 second paragraph. Please consider clarifying that it is cost / access to resources that prevent screening of all patients with a clinical diagnostic interview and that the confidence in the screening instruments relate to them identifying the same level of depression as the clinical interview.
6) Page 7 last line; can you provide an explanation as to why the higher cut off level is deemed appropriate and does this relate to all RA patients or just early RA patients (in other words do levels of depression vary with duration of disease – early RA peak in depression as adjusting to new condition / acute flare or chronic pain / disability mean longer duration of disease results in greater depression). As the point of your paper is early detection of depression it seems important to have the right cut off for a screening tool for this specific sub group of RA patients.
7) Page 10, fourth paragraph. In which order were the items removed? And does it matter?
8) Can you tell us what the seven items were (or at least the four that were not named in the discussion).
9) Great idea for future item banking computer adaptive testing.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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