Reviewer's report

Title: UK population norms for the modified dental anxiety scale with percentile calculator: Adult Dental Health Survey 2009 results

Version: 1 Date: 27 February 2013

Reviewer: Magnus Hakeberg

Reviewer's report:

This study reports on the psychometric properties of the Modified Dental Anxiety Scale and population norm scores in the UK.

The rationale of the study is adequate and the scope of the project is interesting. There are some critical issues the authors need to respond to.

In the introduction, page 4, the authors mention the origin of the MDAS, which is the CDAS. Indicate the difference between the scales in the text.

In the M&M-section, please respond to the following issues:
- Explain regular visiting habits
- Is there any non-respondent analysis?
- The cluster sample design is suitable for multilevel analysis. The number of individuals per household differ, so could there a significant variance part due to households, and individuals?
- The CFA and its test-statistics should be explained in the statistical analysis-section.
- Check the sentence on page 8, under the heading Procedure.

Results-section:
- On page 13, first paragraph, the first 7-8 lines belong to the M&M-section.
- The CFA is better described in a figure where the factor loadings are displayed including the error variances. In the results and discussion, the authors can indicate why the error covariances were specified in the model. Moreover, the the large sample could have been divided into two or more subsamples, thus testing the CFA modeling repeatedly for better interpretation of the MDAS psychometric properties.
- I believe that it is too high precision presented in BOX 1 with regard to mean and Sd
- The text on page 14 really also belong to the M&M-section.

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