Reviewer’s report

Title: Systematic Review: A Single Item Measure of Self-Rated Mental Health

Version: 2
Date: 3 April 2014

Reviewer: James Rohrer

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting paper addressing an important issue. Results are useful. The paper is written well.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The selection criteria omitted at least three self rated mental health items. Frequent Mental Distress is standard in the CDC’s BRFSS and it has an extensive body of validation work to support it. CDC investigators and others have published papers employing it. See for example Overall self-rated health as an outcome indicator in primary care. JE Rohrer, A Arif, A Denison, R Young, and S Adamson J Eval Clin Pract, December 1, 2007; 13(6): 882-8. Another mental health item that has been used previously is the downhearted-and-blue question. See for example Medical care usage and self-rated mental health published in BMC Public Health. Self ratings of depression also may be relevant. See for example Marital status, feeling depressed and self-rated health in rural female primary care patients.

JE Rohrer, ME Bernard, Y Zhang, NH Rasmussen, and H Woroncow J Eval Clin Pract, April 1, 2008; 14(2): 214-7. The authors should mention in the methods and discussion that these items were omitted from the study so that the readers understand the delimitations.

Minor Essential Revisions

None.

Discretionary Revisions

None.

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'