Reviewer's report

Title: Significant variation in salivation by short-term suggestive intervention: A randomized controlled cross-over clinical study

Version: 5 Date: 15 October 2014

Reviewer: Trevor Thompson

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  n/a

- Minor Essential Revisions
  Although mixed models are increasingly commonly used, the majority of readers are probably more familiar with traditional within-groups ANOVA approaches, so would be useful to have a very brief overview of this approach and what it provides (1-2 sentences).

  Table 2 suggests the first baseline is chosen as the reference to compare against direct and indirect conditions. Any particular reason why the average baseline wasn't used? I do appreciate that the difference between baseline 1 & 2 was appropriately included as a model covariate, but simple comparisons appeared to be conducted using baseline 1. Given the minimal difference between baseline 1 and 2, this wouldn't be expected to have a substantive impact on the results, but I think it would be useful to state explicitly that baseline 1 was used as the reference and also perhaps why (esp. as baseline 1 could be argued to represent the time of max. participant uncertainty/anxiety over the experimental procedure).

  I think it would be useful to acknowledge that a pretty specific sample was employed - i.e. friends of the primary author, which could mean difference on certain influential unmeasured characteristics (educational level, responsivity to hypnosis etc.) relative to the population. This doesn't compromise the findings, but I think there should be 1-2 sentences in the discussion acknowledging population generalizability still needs to be established.

- Discretionary Revisions

  Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

  Quality of written English: Acceptable

  Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests