Reviewer's report

Title: Life changes and depressive symptoms: the effects of valence and amount of change

Version: 2 Date: 10 May 2013

Reviewer: Thomas Olino

Reviewer's report:

The Present paper is a revision of a paper examining the influence of valence and amount of life changes on depression symptom changes in adolescence. The authors have been quite responsive to the previous comments and I am nearly completely satisfied with the current manuscript.

Minor Essential Revisions

More information needs to be presented about how the transition groups were defined. What were the cutoffs and why were those selected?

Discretionary Revisions

The other Reviewer and I may disagree about the need of the aforementioned transition analyses. The results of the analyses for valence in the transitions seems to be fully consistent with the results for the curvilinear influence of valence on depression symptoms at T3 after adjusting for T2 symptoms. A similar curvilinear pattern seems to be present for amount of change in life transitions, with an OR greater than 1 for increasing depression and less than 1 for decreasing depression. An explicit statement about whether there is a curvilinear influence of the amount of change on change in depression would be good to include.

Rather than separate logistic regression models for low to high and high to low transitions, I think it would be a better strategy to estimate multinomial logistic regression models. Based on the a priori questions, it would be reasonable to focus exclusively on the same comparisons, but there may be benefits (e.g., smaller SEs) for the multinomial models.

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