Reviewer's report

Title: Reliability and validity of Hospital anxiety and depression scale (HADS) in Emergency department in Saudi Arabia

Version: 4  Date: 17 March 2015

Reviewer: Amy Stuck

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review "Reliability and validity of Hospital anxiety and depression scales (HADS) in Emergency department in Saudi Arabia.

In general, this is a well-done study that adds to our knowledge base about the importance of valid assessments for important psychiatric disorders in the ED. However, some revisions are needed. Comments follow below:

Major Compulsory Revisions: None

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Abstract states assessing for anxiety and depression in A & E settings are very rare, yet later sites studies where it’s being done. You nicely stated in lines 54-56 that HADS is not used in Arab countries and more importantly has not been validated. Recommend being clear whether the study purpose is validation of the HADS in A & E settings or validation of the Arab translation of the HADS.

2. Introduction: Line 35-36: Recommend specifying if these are the percentage of patients who are medically ill with anxiety and depression versus the prevalence of anxiety and depression in all people in the Arab world.

Discretionary Revisions:

1. Line 37-38: should read “thus, resulting in a delay in further appropriate…”

2. Line 56-59: Recommend more clarity on the purpose of the assessment. I believe the point you’re trying to make is that patients who are in acute distress in an A & E setting are arguably the most vulnerable to the negative effects of depression and anxiety can have on their course of illness or injury and outcomes, therefore they should be assessed appropriately.

3. Typo on line 75 “Patients”

4. Line 87: Recommend changing sex to gender

5. Discussion: Line 167: Did the other studies not use the HADS author’s recommended cut-off points, and if so, do you know why? Can you cite?

6. Line 184: Did the French study use the same cut-off points? Recommend expanding on what you attribute the higher percentage of anxiety to?

Note: Factor analysis is not within my area for expertise, therefore I did not comment on this section of the manuscript
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests