Reviewer’s report

Title: The development of CHAMP: a CHecklist for the Appraisal of Moderators and Predictors

Version: 0 Date: 13 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Siobhan Brown

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript clearly and thoroughly describes the development of the CHAMP checklist. I believe the paper could be much stronger if you describe in more detail why such a list is needed. Further, it would be helpful include a description of the settings in which you picture it will be used.

Minor comments:

On page 13, line 23, you mention pre-specification of hypotheses as a criterion that related to study reporting quality. As pre-specification of hypotheses is a rather important study design and analysis characteristic, I hope that you mean that mentioning the pre-specification of hypotheses is a reporting issue. You may want to clarify for those of us who are sensitive about such matters.

The paper should be thoroughly reviewed for grammatical errors and typos. For example:

p. 2, line 47: "it's" should be "its."

p. 3, line 10: delete "settings."

p. 3, line 13: delete "The" from "The understanding."

p. 4, line 29: "In addition ,authors" should be corrected to "In addition, authors."

p. 9, line 42: Insert "studies" after "related."

p. 10, line 50: "Comprises" should be changed to "contains" or similar wording. Comprises implies that the final version is entirely made up of the introduction and definitions.

CHAMP instrument (Appendix 1):

Page 5: I suggest inserting a page break before the "overall judgment" section; this will prevent the page containing only the comment box that appears on the following page.
Page 9 and 10: In the sample size section, you should directly address the issue of a clinically meaningful effect. Without doing so, it doesn't make sense to talk about a study being too small (or power analyses).

Page 11 (item 9): You may wish to revise the statements about how significance is shown. A confidence interval that excludes one may or may not be significant. It would be more broadly applicable to say "excludes the null hypothesis."

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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