**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Nuancing the Role of Social Skills- A Longitudinal Study of Early Maternal Psychological Distress and Adolescent Depressive Symptoms

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 29 Jul 2017

**Reviewer:** Thomas Olino

**Reviewer's report:**

The present study examines the interaction between maternal distress and child social skills in predicting adolescent depressive symptoms. The authors found evidence for the interaction being present in boys, but not girls. The data come from an impressive longitudinal study spanning approximately 15 years. However, there are remaining questions for the work.

The primary question that I have is about the availability of the maternal distress and child social skills at more than these assessments. If available at multiple occasions, there are stronger opportunities for evaluating the manner in which these constructs are related over time. If possible, path analyses or structural equation modeling that incorporates more longitudinal assessments could significantly strengthen the work.

I was curious about the authors' perspective of the lack of associations between maternal distress and child social skills. This absent association leads one to presuppose moderation, but, a priori, based on the framing of the paper, I expected some statements about mediation/indirect effects.

The initial splitting of the sample was curious. Formal tests of gender differences in the associations between variables would be more appropriately and strongly tested using interactions with gender. Without these analyses, interpretation of significant findings in one sex, but not the other is premature.

The authors have focused on the phenomenological associations between the constructs of interest. However, there is limited attention to the specific mechanisms that are at work.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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

Yes

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

No

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:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?
I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal