Reviewer's report

Title: Associations between childhood maltreatment and emotion processing biases in major depression: results from a dot-probe task

Version: 1 Date: 20 February 2015

Reviewer: Tamsyn Van Rheenen

Reviewer's report:

I believe this is a well written and timely article; however I have some suggestions to improve the manuscript:

1. Although the inability to control for medication status is a problem in any cognitive study, I would suggest running some subgroup analysis comparing individuals on vs off antidepressant medication to determine whether this makes any difference to the results. I realise this analysis will be underpowered, but it may still provide an indication of the influence of medications in this sample.
2. Can the authors provide a breakdown of the number of individuals who have experienced past trauma vs those that hadn’t?
3. The correlational and hierarchical regression analyses should be bonferroni corrected or corrected at least to a conservative level of p<.01 given the number of comparisons.
4. The frequency breakdown of education should be given in Table 1
5. Is illness duration referring to months since diagnosis or months since symptom onset?
6. Theoretical ranges should be listed for the self-report measures
7. Abbreviations of all scales need to be listed in full beneath each table
8. All regressors should be listed in Table 4 and 5 so that readers can view the change in beta.
9. Please provide the partial eta square value of each predictor
10. The lack of control group limits

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 have no competing interests