Reviewer’s report

Title: Effect of religiosity/spirituality and sense of coherence on depression within a rural population in Greece: the Spili III project

Version: 2 Date: 19 March 2015

Reviewer: John Peteet

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This paper describes an observational, cross-sectional study of the response of a rural Greek population to standardized instruments measuring depressed mood, religion/spirituality (R/S), and a sense of coherence (SOC). The findings are consistent with an existing literature showing an inverse relationship between R/S and depression, and add to the discussion of the relationship among a sense of coherence, stress and depression.

While the authors refer to the implications of stress for physical health as well, they do not correlate their findings with measures of stress and physical health.

The paper could be improved by discussion of:

(1) whether the SOC and BDI are measuring the same constructs (e.g. meaning, optimism and agency) and if so are not able to add new information (low SOC has been previously correlated with anxiety and depression).

(2) whether increased R/S could reflect the greater ability of less depressed individuals to be optimistic and social and see meaning in life, rather than only constituting a protective factor against depression.

(3) specific limitations of future research which could build on these findings to explore causality in relation to points (1) and (2) above.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.