Author’s response to reviews

Title: Characteristic distribution of the total and individual item scores on the Kessler Screening Scale for Psychological Distress (K6) in US adults

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June 21, 2017

René Ernst Nielsen
Associate Editor
BMC Psychiatry

Dear Dr. Nielsen:

Thank you for your letter and for the reviewer comments concerning our manuscript entitled “Characteristic pattern of the sum of the depressive symptom item scores using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) in US adults.” We have read the comments of the two
reviewers carefully and have made the required corrections, which we hope meet your approval. The manuscript ID is BPSY-D-17-00157.

Our responses to the reviewers’ comments are given below. We thank the reviewers for carefully reading our manuscript. The reviewers’ comments were most helpful and gave us useful suggestions to improve our paper. We believe that our manuscript has been improved satisfactorily and hope it will be accepted for publication in BMC Psychiatry.

Yours Sincerely,
Shinichiro Tomitaka M.D.

Reviewer 2 (Rob Saunders):

##Abstract

1. Comment: *Conclusion: "The present results potentially enable estimation of how depressive symptoms distribute in the general population."* - Suggest amended to 'The results presented have the potential to estimate the distribution of depressive symptoms in the general population'.

Response: We agree your advice. The sentence has been changed as suggested (P 3, line 40)

##Discussion

1. Comment: “I still feel some small mention of the variation at the high end should be mentioned in the discussion for balance. I appreciate you've mentioned in the results section, and I think the additions here work well, but it's still something to mention in the discussion - in one
sense it’s a finding that must be apparent in all research like this as extreme scorers are very rare in a general population. Potential for future research in this area??”

Response: To explain the fluctuation at the highest scores, we added sentences as follows

P 20, line 40. Our findings indicated that the total scores fluctuated more with the increase of total scores on a log-normal scale (Figure 2B). These results are congruent with previous studies [11,17]. It is likely that the small sample sizes for the highest scores caused the fluctuation. In fact, as the total scores increased, the frequencies decreased.