Reviewer’s report

Title: Testing decision-making competency of schizophrenia participants in clinical trials. A meta-analysis and meta-regression

Version: 0 Date: 20 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Markus Boeckle

Reviewer’s report:

The MS with the number BPSY-D-17-00394 with the title "Testing decision-making competency of schizophrenia participants in clinical trials. A meta-analysis and meta-regression" reports about meta-analytic differences in decision making processes between schizophrenic patients and healthy controls. The authors have conducted at well designed literature review and analysed the data accordingly. Still there are issues that still need revision. The introduction is focusing directly on schizophrenic patients without giving general information about decision making capacity in healthy people. Based on this one could follow how these compare to patients with schizophrenia and some background why this is different in these patients. Thus, I suggest that the authors should only turn to specific test and moral conclusions after setting the field in a more general way. Additionally, all results on meta-regression are non-significant but are interpreted in the discussion as if they have found significant differences. Additionally the comparisons between 2 outside and 11 studies within the US across all subscaled does not provide an unbiased sample for meta-analysis.

Detailed comments:

Page 2

Background: This does not provide information about the background but is presenting the research questions only. Please rephrase in order to represent the background of the research questions.

Materials and Methods: This represents the literature review but not the meta-analysis, please rephrase.

Page 3:

After conclusion insert space.

Rephrase first sentence in order to state first facts and then contrast them to your ethical predicament.

Line 31. Decreased the difference between schizophrenia patients and healthy controls in what dimension?
Line 21 and subsequent occurrences. Add a space between word and citation.

Page 6

Line 19. Please give short definitions of positive and negative symptoms for the general reader.

Page 13.

Line 14. Conducting a meta-analysis based on three studies needs highly cautious interpretation.

Line 31. The overall relates to the three studies or all 13 studies in your sample. Please be more precise.

Page 14

Line 45. Same as above. But also in all following last paragraph within a sub-scale it is not clear what the results relate to, the full sample or a partial sample.

Page 15.

You always included the 13 studies except in the sub-scale "expressing a choice" please write that in the general information above and do not reiterate in each sub-scale. Potentially indicate number of studies with N=13 or 10 in brackets.

Line 38. Eleven studies were performed in the US and two outside only. I would exclude this comparison from the main text and put it into a supplementary as this not representing an adequate comparison. Please consider this for the whole text.

Page 20.

Line 7. You discuss non-significant results in a way that suggests that your results are significant. Please interpret your results according to your findings.

Line 55. Same as above. Age is not significant in your analysis, still you discuss them in a way suggesting that there is a significant result without bringing your own results in relation to the findings of the other studies.

Page 22

Line 7. Is the number in brackets the number of studies? I thought you have 13 studies in the sample.

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.

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

**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?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.
I declare that I have no competing interest regarding all the above points.

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