Reviewer’s report

Title: Trauma Exposure and the Mediating Role of Posttraumatic Stress on Somatic Symptoms in Civilian War Victims

Version: 0 Date: 21 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Yuval Neria

Reviewer's report:
The paper “Trauma Exposure and the Mediating Role of Posttraumatic Stress on Somatic Symptoms in Civilian War Victims” is an analysis of data collected 10 years after the 1998/1999 war in Kosovo. The study aims at understating the mediating role of PTSD symptoms in the relationships between exposure to trauma and somatization symptoms. The study has strengths. The research question is interesting, and the analytic strategy is quite sophisticated. The findings are of interest as well, particularly regarding sex differences (or lack off) and the PTSD clusters involved in the mediation. Regarding writing, although well written copy editing is needed in various parts of the paper.

I have a number of comments regarding shortcomings and limitations.

1. Sample is small
2. Study is cross sectional and conducted 7-8 years ago, in a population which endured potential trauma a decade earlier. Both facts raise problems of aging data, using old instruments (e.g., PDS; Harvard Trauma Questionnaire; SCL-90), and time interval after trauma whereas intervening factors are not controlled in analysis as in longitudinal surveys. Most limitations are acknowledged by the authors.
3. Lack of information about method of random sampling. Need to be added.
4. What are the "gold standard" procedures that were used for translation?
5. The authors need to add a comparison between the PTSD and the non PTSD groups on all demographic and clinical variables. If the groups are different on demographics, they need to consider accounting for those differences in the analysis.
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.
Yes

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

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