Author’s response to reviews

Title: The relationship between marital satisfaction and depression in infertile couples: An Actor-Partner Interdependence Model approach

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor in Chief,

First of all, we thank the respected reviewers and the editorial board for their valuable comments that have helped us in improving the manuscript.

Best regards

Mostafa Hosseini
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Technical Comments:
1. Please include Declarations heading in the Declarations section.
Response: Many thanks for your comment. Correction has been made (Ethical consideration has been removed from the Methods section).
Editor Comments:

In addition to the referee comments, please address the following:

1. There appears to be some overlap with your published study: https://hqlo.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12955-018-0904-0
   Please can you clarify in your response to the editor how the current study builds on and differs from this one and why it is not cited? Were the cohorts/participants the same?
   Please cite and discuss the published study early in manuscript, before the methods, indicating how the current study relates to/builds on the published one.
   Response: The mentioned study has been conducted on 180 infertile couples during August-September 2017 and published recently in “Health and Quality of Life Outcomes” (24 April 2018). The study samples and period of the study are different from the present study. We cited the above article in this manuscript.

2. Referee 1 has not been able to re-review, but we ask that some of their points are expanded in your revisions as follows:
   -4.1) "The authors stated that couples were assessed when they were presenting for infertility treatment. All the couples were starting a new infertility treatment? "
   This has been added to the abstract but remains unclear in the methods in the main text.
   Response: Thanks for your comment. Correction has been done as suggested (“in the evaluation phase of treatment” was added in the Methods section).

   -5.1.1) "The authors should clarify if none of the infertile couples have children."
   -5.1.2) "The authors described in Table 1 that almost half of infertile couples did not experience failure of previous infertility treatment. What this means?"
   Please add detail on both these points to the Results section.
   Response: In the first phase of the Reviewing, the comments and questions has been answered.
   5.1.1) As presented in Table 1, the prevalence of secondary infertility was 27.7% (n=39).
   Definition of “Secondary Infertility”: When a woman is unable to bear a child, either due to the inability to become pregnant or the inability to carry a pregnancy to a live birth following either a previous pregnancy or a previous ability to carry a pregnancy to a live birth, she would be classified as having secondary infertility.
   5.1.2) They were referred to our clinic for the first time and without any previous treatment.
   The following sentence has been edited in the Results section: “Of the couples, 27.7% had secondary infertility, 23.4% had history of abortion and 49.6% were treated for infertility for the first time.”

   5.3.2) "Did the authors consider testing the characteristics of couples' infertility as possible moderators of these effects?"
   Response: Thanks for your valuable comment. For simplicity, only the actor and partner effects of marital satisfaction on depression symptoms were considered to test the Marital Discord Model of Depression (MDMD). The evaluations of the effect of covariates such as age, educational level, cause of infertility, duration of marriage, and infertility duration were not the aim of our study.

   (discretionary) Does this warrant brief discussion or discussion as something for further investigation in the future? Please add sentences to the Discussion if so.
   Response: Thanks for your comment, In the Introduction and Discussion sections, the importance of using APIM framework has been pointed out frequently for inherently dyadic data.
3. Please add the period your study covered to the abstract.
Response: Thanks for your valuable comment. We added the period and location of the study in the Abstract section. The following sentence was added: “We collected data in a referral infertility center in Tehran, Iran between February and May 2017”.

4. Did both members of each couple sign the informed consent form? please clarify this in the Ethics approval and consent to participate section.
Response: Thanks for your comment. Yes, a signed consent form was obtained from both members of couples before data collection.

5. STROBE guidelines. In accordance with BioMed Central editorial policies (http://www.biomedcentral.com/submissions/editorial-policies#standards+of+reporting), could you please ensure your manuscript reporting adheres to STROBE guidelines (http://www.strobe-statement.org/) for reporting observational research. This is so your methodology can be fully evaluated and utilised. Can you please include a completed STROBE checklist as an additional file when submitting your revised manuscript.
Response: As far as possible and relevant, we have followed the STROBE guidelines in writing this article.

Reviewer reports:
Hatta Sidi (Reviewer 2): The revisions has tremendous improvements.
In the last paragraph, before the "Conclusion" subheading, it was mentioned, "Longitudinal research is needed to better understand the relationship between marital satisfaction and depression symptoms". I suggest to add, "...as these relationship can be multi-factorial and complex" after these sentences, i.e. "Longitudinal research is needed to better understand the relationship between marital satisfaction and depression symptoms, as these relationship can be multi-factorial and complex" and cite relevant references for infertile couple study:


2. Yeoh Seen Heng, Hatta Sidi, Nik Ruzyanei Nik Jaafar, Rosdinom Razali, Hari Ram. Asia Pac J Psych (S), Vol.5 April 2013: 50 – 54

Response: Many thanks for your comment. The sentence has been edited as suggested by Reviewer #1 and related references has been cited.