Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of mental disorders and epidemiological associations in post-conflict primary care attendees: a cross-sectional study in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka

Version: 0 Date: 10 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS: To view the full report from the academic peer reviewer, please see the attached file.

REVIEWER COMMENTS FROM REPORT: General statement: The authors aimed to examine the prevalence of mental disorders in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka in a sample of more than 1.000 participants.

Overall, the manuscript is well written and contains an important topic, which makes it suitable for publication. Nevertheless, the manuscript has some weaknesses which are listed below in a chronological order. In general, the structure of the manuscript is very different from other ones, which might be due to the guidelines of a specific journal but makes it different to read (information about the measure in the appendix etc.). In addition to that, some important information about the statistical procedures used is missing and should be added.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

General statement:

The authors aimed to examine the prevalence of mental disorders in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka in a sample of more than 1.000 participants.

Overall, the manuscript is well written and contains an important topic, which makes it suitable for publication. Nevertheless, the manuscript has some weaknesses which are listed below in a chronological order. In general, the structure of the manuscript is very different from other ones, which might be due to the guidelines of a specific journal but makes it different to read (information about the measure in the appendix etc.). In addition to that, some important information about the statistical procedures used is missing and should be added.

Evidence before this study, page 3 lines 49ff:

- The statement of the authors regarding the literature research remains unclear. Please make a literature research according to the content of your study and based on the latest literature in this field.
Introduction section

Minor points:

- Past prevalence rates in the introduction section vary widely. It would be helpful to read the opinion of the authors why they vary so widely

- In general, the introduction section of less than one page is very short and could be prolonged and filled with some more information about the present situation in Sri Lanka and about the link between the history and the development of mental disorders.

Methods section ◇ Sampling

Minor points:

- As stated in the manuscript, the authors excluded people with severe mental illness from the present study. As the main topic of the present study is to examine the prevalence of mental disorders, this should be reflected critically. Furthermore, the authors should explicitly write concrete numbers of excluded people.

- Sample size was calculated based on the prevalence rates of anxiety (32.6%) and depression (22.2%) without taking into account the high comorbidity of both. This should be corrected.

- Calculating the sample size: Please cite a reference for this procedure.

Methods section ◇ Statistical analysis

Minor points:

- Please write "univariate" instead of "univariable" (the same for "multivariable") and correct "colinearity".

- Please give a reference for all statistical procedures used, e.g. "using backwards selection with a removal threshold of 0.1".
Results section

Major points:

- As the authors stated above the calculation of regression models, the reader expects usual statistical information of this procedure like standardized Beta coefficients, significance levels, $R^2$, etc., which is missing completely in the manuscript. Instead of this, throughout the whole manuscript odds ratios are given. Why? And how did the authors calculate those? Additionally, please check, whether all variables included in the regression models are at least ordinally scaled.

- Please avoid double writing of results in the main text and in the tables as there is no plus of information.

Reference list section

Minor points:

- Reference 11 is formatted differently. Please correct.

Table 1

- The decimal points of all results (and not only in table 1) is formatted strangely (in the middle of the line).

- In the category "marital status", there is missing one person of the sample.

Page 21 ◊ Validity and translation…

- "New instruments were adapted for use in the study setting through established procedures" Please give a reference for the procedures used.

- PHQ for the assessment of somatoform symptoms should be named PHQ-15 as this is the right name.

- Please tell the readers the number of items in the PSQ and standardize the information given in all questionnaire sections.

- The cut-off given for the Lubben Social Network Scale is wrong, because participants with 12 points on this scale still are at risk for isolation! Please correct the results according to this.

- Where do the cut-offs for social support availability come from? It is referenced with number 8 in the list, but the researchers there did not calculate or use these cut-offs.
ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Everything is already stated in the section above.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

**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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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