Reviewer’s report

Title: Comparison of exhaustion symptoms in patients with stress-related and other psychiatric and somatic diagnoses

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Reviewer: Ingibjorg H Jonsdottir

Reviewer's report:

This paper is still suffering from some issues related to languages, expressions and unclear background in relation to aims and results. Beginning with the discussion, the first part is nicely written and says it’s all. This is also the case for the conclusion in the abstract that nicely summarize the results of the paper. However, other parts of the discussion and some parts of the background are not in line with the subject of the paper and I urge the authors to carefully look through these sections to make the paper more readable. For instance, the paper does not measure prevalence and the part dealing with prevalence's could be shortened and raising problems in measuring prevalence it not warranted and only confuses the reader. Many phrases are a bit awkward like "risk of being treated" and I recommend that the authors omit this sentence along with several other sentences not relevant for the study. It seems strange after stating that stress-related problems are increasing in Denmark that the only thing needed is a scale. Please add a sentence or two about the need of prevention and treatments including valid measures to detect and monitor.. etc etc and from there you can concentrate on this study of this rating scale studied or even better omit his part and go more straight to the content of the paper, i.e. the usability of KEDS. The section on ED and other scales should be looked through as neither ED or other scales are mentioned again in the paper.

The same problem applies in the section elaborating on a rating scale as it was just any rating scale that can be used both in the clinic and among healthy. The aim of the paper is to evaluate KEDS and not to find rating scale for healthy population as this was not performed.

A recommendation is to keep to the aim that the paper which is solely about KEDS and its usability for different patient's populations. It’s is not about measuring prevalence or usability in detecting exhaustion in healthy populations or a general paper about stress scales. Please work with these issues throughout the background, bearing this in mind and I’m certain that the paper will improve substantially.

METHODS

Would it be better to change the heading "exhaustion symptom" with e.g. KEDS or the Danish version of KEDS or omit the heading? The entire study is about KEDS and how usable it is in
discriminating patient groups. Since no control group is included the study has limitation in concluding about the magnitude of symptoms of exhaustion except between different patient groups.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria are unclear. Is the inclusion criteria "first time visitors" or were patients who had visit the clinic more than one time excluded?

Do you have the information how many of the patients are on sick-leave?

RESULTS

Is it possible to say anything about the population eligible but not included (around 1800 patient), like age? Gender? Diagnoses? What is possible to generalize from the population studied?

Discussion

I suggest that the authors omit this sentence; "In view of this, it may be a bit disappointing that KEDS has limited use as an aid in the differential diagnosis between stress-related disorders and other disorders." This is being concluded previously in the discussion and there is no need for this sentence.

The strength section needs to be revised. The part dealing with burnout does not fit in since this paper does not directly deal with burnout.

Finally, the paper is still suffering from several language issues

Some few examples;

"Stronger" symptoms cannot be used.

Is "presented" really the correct phrase to use instead of attending or visiting the clinic or seeking care?

Is it not more correct to write "symptoms of exhaustion" instead of "exhaustion symptoms" as well as patients with exhaustion disorder instead of exhaustion disorders patients

Instead of "asking consecutive" write "consecutively asking "
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

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I am able to assess the statistics

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