Reviewer's report

Title: Nightmare experience and family relationships in healthy volunteers and nightmare disorder patients

Version: 1 Date: 30 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Heather Gunn

Reviewer's report:

The authors responded to many of the critiques; however, there are remaining questions about the relevance of some of the literature review and the underlying reasons for examining how family environments relate to specific aspects of the nightmare experience. Moreover, there are remaining questions about the significance of findings in supporting the neurocognitive theory, and the significance of differential findings for patients versus healthy controls.

1. The paragraph on page 5 describing the FRQ and NEQ seems out of place in the Introduction as it a description of the questionnaires, but not relevant to the literature review or to why this study might be unique in including these questionnaires. Are previous studies limited in their assessment of family and nightmare experiences? If so, this should be explicitly stated and conveyed.

2. It is still difficult to keep track of what the scales mean. The paper would be easier to follow if it the relevance of each of the family and nightmare scales was immediately apparent (see #4).

3. In the discussion, it is difficult to follow how the significant findings directly support the neurocognitive model of nightmares. How do the significant findings specifically address the neurocognitive model?

4. The first line of page 12 helps tie in the significance of your findings, in part because it qualifies what these scales mean.

5. Family therapy might be appropriate in youth, but it's more accurate to say that consideration of family dynamics during childhood may be relevant to nightmare disorders.

6. The discussion would benefit from a brief discussion of null findings and some discussion about NEQ and FRQ in patients and healthy volunteers. What are the authors' thoughts on significant findings for healthy versus patients?

7. Table 2. It's not clear why there are dashes and blank cells in this table.
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?
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No

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