Reviewer’s report

Title: Depressive symptoms and clustering of risk behaviours among adolescents attending senior vocational education: a cross-sectional study

Version: 1  Date: 9 December 2014

Reviewer: Yuyan Shi

Reviewer’s report:

This study focuses on an interesting research question and is well written. However, some limitations and clarifications need be addressed before considering for publication.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. As the study uses senior vocational education (SVE) population for the analysis, providing a context of this population will help readers outside of Netherlands understand the general characteristics of this population in the country, and the importance of studying this population.

2. As the study drew on a sample from a randomized controlled trial, please provide information to explain to what extent the study population is representative of Netherlands SVE population.

3. The study used CES-D summary scores, which is a continuous variable. Because the association between clinical outcomes and summary scores from questionnaires is often non-linear, please also run logistics regression of a binary outcome of the scores (you use 16 as the cutoff in the study).

4. Truancy data has missing values, then why did you use full sample (N=584) in regressions? How did you handle the missing values?

Minor essential revisions:

5. “Problem behaviors” is not a very good name for delinquency, truancy and debts, as substance use is also problem behaviors. Please rename this cluster to distinguish itself from substance use.

6. Please remove table 3, and provide information in texts only.

7. Please combine table 4-5, and add logistic model results.

8. Beta coefficients are not very intuitive. Please provide interpretations.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.