Author’s response to reviews

Title: Manuscript Do negative childhood conditions increase the risk of somatic symptoms in adolescence? – A prospective cohort study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Editor Comments:

As suggested earlier, the authors might simply report what was significantly associated with the outcome at what age, and whether the same pattern of association was observed consistently at the two different ages, etc.

Reply

The manuscript has now been re-written with emphasis on reducing all comparison between risk estimates and reporting results from the two time points separately.

• Changes were made to the Abstract, results section (page 2 and 3): phrases like strong or moderate associations have been replaced with reports of significant results or risk estimates.
• Results section: again, phrases like strong or moderate associations have been replaced with reports of significant results or risk estimates throughout the section
• Discussion section: phrases like "strong associations", "moderate associations" or "considerably reduced" have been replaced with reports of significant results or estimates throughout the section.

The claims of “strong association,” “moderation association,” the association being “considerably reduced at age 18” (Page 13, line 14),

Reply

The whole paragraph has now been re-written:
In this study, we found statistically significant associations between experiencing poor family functioning and reporting somatic symptoms at ages 15 or 18, when adjusted for other childhood risk factors. The relative risks were 2.5 for the boys at age 15 and 1.71 for the girls at age 18. Negative life events up to the age of 15 showed a statistically significant association with reporting somatic symptoms at age 15, but the association was not significant at age 18. No relative risks above 1.35 were found between parents reporting somatic symptoms and the participants reporting somatic symptoms at ages 15 or 18.

“the sizes of the estimates remain unchanged at age 18” (page 14, line 32), and indeed,

Reply

The last part of the sentence has now been deleted, so that it is only the results related to age 15 that are being reported here.

all the phrases comparing effect sizes at age 15 and 18, should be dropped throughout the paper.

Reply

A thoroughly attempt to do so has been made

Accordingly, the second paragraph on page 15 that interprets the “moderate” association at age 18, though plausible, should also be dropped as it is not applicable to this paper.

Reply

The paragraph from " Early adolescence is characterized..."until "...relationships play an increasing role in adolescent's life" as been deleted.

On a more minor note, “Thus” on page 4 line 28 does not seem appropriate and needs to be dropped, as the previous sentence does not refer to a bidirectional association.

Reply

"Thus" has now been deleted.

“Comprehensibility” on page 10 line 38 might be replaced with “interpretability.”
On page 11 line 17, “significantly more girls” might be replaced with “a higher proportion of girls” as the sheer number of girls is not of interest.

The text has been changed as suggested.