Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 0 Date: 08 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Margret Tomasdottir

Reviewer's report:

Well written article on an interesting topic, well conducted.

There are no major comments from me or suggestions for revisions. Only minor comments, mainly regarding discussion and depth of analysis. They will come later in my review.

Abstract:

Background - rather negative introduction, not explaining why this research topic is important in other ways than that more research is lacking. Might be good to explain the importance of the topic. Line 11 - this prospective study expands. Background does not mention any background at all, only the aim of the study - stated twice. Aim should not end in question mark.

Background - sentence two is very long and a bit confusing - the first part of the sentence says that international studies show 40% of adolescents experiencing back pain and second part says that 20-30% of US adolescent experience back pain. Maybe devide into 2 sentences to decrease confusion?

Line 15 - total number and severity of somatic complaints increase during childhood and adolescence. What does that mean? Increase from what then? Do you mean from childhood to adolescence or increase as time develops through childhood? Or has increased during recent years?

Lines 53-59 - psychopathology is a rather strong word - what is meant by it here? Could this part be better explained? What link between somatic symptoms and somatic diseases in adulthood - what about mention of the ACE studies that are the most relevant studies examining childhood adversity and adult health.

Aim - again the question mark should not be there.

Method - I am curious from which questionnaire you took information about negative life events. From the abstract it could be understood that it is form the parental questionnaire but would be better if is from the adolescent questionnaire.

Outcome:
Would be good to know if this is standard cut off regarding low or high somatization. And why the cut off is different for 15 years, 18 years and adults. (5, 8 and 3). - or is it maybe explained in the analysis as dichotomized at the 75th percentile? It is still interesting to get a bit of discussion on the different cutoff points.

Line 31 - why was this scale chosen but not more standard ones - as the ACE questionnaire?

The wording in Line 22 „all togheter“ might be made better.

Results:

There is big difference in the complaint of somatic symptoms between boys and girls - the sentence in the abstract regarding strongest in boys at age 15 is in that light a bit confusing (I understood it as stronger in boys than girls).

Discussion:

I miss the following: More discussion on the importance of linking somatic symptoms to family situation; Why there is such a big difference between 15 and 18 regarding the exposing factors; why the connection to negative life events isn´t stronger (as compared to so many other studies); possible interaction between exposing factors - as poor functioning and negative life events - and especially why this connection is attenuated at age 18; possible implication for future health.

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

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.

I am able to assess the statistics
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Acceptable

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