Reviewer's report

Title: Daytime napping associated with increased symptom severity in fibromyalgia syndrome

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Reviewer: Lance McCracken

Reviewer's report:

The authors here identify an important area for further study. Their study also has several strengths, including a large community-based sample. Their results are potentially useful, but they perhaps could be framed more clearly.

Discretionary Revisions

1. In the first sentence of the background section the authors say that FMS is associated with “decreased ability to inhibit concomitant pain responses.” This statement seems open to different interpretations, such as whether it is the person who has the decreased ability or the nervous system. In the former case it almost sounds like describing people with FMS as poor copers who cannot control their pain responses. I do not think this is what the authors mean.

2. I found the assessment of frequency of daytime napping to be very coarse. There seems to be a great deal of space between once a day, once a week, and once a month. I understand that in the end they are only interested in those who are daily nappers versus those who do it less, but I wonder if there is something about the rough categorizing of napping frequency that needs to be addressed.

3. Does “painkillers” mean opioids?

4. The authors do quite a lot of categorizing of variables where the underlying dimensions are continuous. Perhaps they could at least mention the loss of information this entails or describe it as a limitation.

5. I thought there was a chance here to discuss treatment implications, not merely whether napping ought to be advised or not, but whether there is some role for psychological (or other) treatments to either address napping behaviour directly or its presumed underlying causes.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. There were no specific hypotheses stated, this was not acknowledged, nor was there a reason provide for not employing hypotheses to guide the analyses. Please could the authors address this is some way. This is important as the authors make a number of choices in looking at their data, and they might want to avoid the appearance of outcome bias.

2. On page 5, just before the “assessment” section, there is a sentence included twice. It begins “To enable....”

3. I believe the authors should be more specific about the variables that do and
do not show skewed distribution. Their statement about this in the analysis section seems imprecise.

4. On page 8 did the authors mean to say “participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria as they did not complete >20% on the included measure…”?

5. On page 9 it is difficult to know what the p-values are for each of the correlations and the style of reporting the p-values and significant figures seems a bit mixed up. What are the asterisks meant to reflect?

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. I believe the authors need to address the issue of direction of causality. Napping may lead to problems but equally people with many problems may nap more. I think they need to explicitly state that their data cannot sort this out. They may also choose to discuss which they feel is more likely if they can back it up with some type of evidence or theory.

2. The size of the relationships identified here are small and in some cases border on trivial. The authors should help the reader to appreciate this.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.