Reviewer’s report

**Title:** The effects of industry funding and positive outcomes in the interpretation of clinical trial results: a randomized trial among Dutch psychiatrists

**Version:** 0 **Date:** 23 Jun 2018

**Reviewer:** Maia Lesosky

**Reviewer's report:**

The manuscript describes a survey of Dutch psychiatrists. The survey itself randomised emails to individuals to read one of 4 different abstracts with different outcomes / industry funding disclosure. The main survey outcome was evaluated on a 10-point Likert scale.

The major issue is around the study design, and subsequent conclusions.

1. The claim of a 45% response rate is somewhat misleading, given that 1566 were randomised and only 395 surveys analysed.

   The response rate (regardless of the denominator) is low enough to impact significant bias. The descriptive summaries in Table 1 are appropriate, but do nothing to assure the reader that the sample analysed is at all representative of the general (Dutch psychiatrists) population.

2. In a classical hypothesis testing framework, the absence of statistical significance, which is the primary finding of this analysis does not impart the conclusion of no effect. The result of 'no significant association' based on a hypothesis test only allows one to conclude there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of that test. The language throughout the manuscript needs to be changed to reflect an appropriate interpretation of these hypothesis tests.

3. It is hard to evaluate if ANOVA can be considered appropriate without any reporting of the distribution of outcomes. A 10-point likert scale can easily behave as a discrete variable, for which ANOVA would be inappropriate.

4. The discussion and conclusion overstate the findings and should emphasis the effect sizes more that the results of the significance tests.

**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.

No

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

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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