Reviewer’s report

Title: Relationships between burnout, turnover intention, job satisfaction, job demands and job resources for mental health personnel in an Australian mental health service

Version: 0 Date: 30 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Jack Chen

Reviewer's report:

The authors have conducted the largest study in the Australian mental health context with two aims: 1. To explore the relationships (through bivariate Pearson correlation coefficients) between burnout, turnover intention and job satisfaction; 2: To examine the differences in burnout, turnover intention, job satisfaction, job demands or job resources between different mental health professional groups and settings (through t-test and one-way ANOVA). I have a few questions on the design and analysis of the study as follows:

1. The choice of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OBI) as the measures of Burnout. This inventory was only scarcely used in the mental health setting compared to the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) as shown In the most recently published systematic review by O'Connor et al. 2018;( Burnout in mental health professionals: A systematic review and meta-analysis of prevalence and determinants European Psychiatry; 53: 74-89). The MBI inventory provided subdomains of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. Could authors provided some discussion on why the OBI was chosen instead of MBI ? Are there any substantial chance that the results related to burnout could be altered should the MBI be used?

2. The Pearson coefficients used in testing the research questions 1 assume simple linear correlation between constructs which may not be true. The low correlation coefficient showed in the results may be due to the fact that the analyses method used failed to take into account the nonlinear relationship between two items. More importantly, correlation is not causation and the interpretations should be exercised with great caution. Another important limitation of the method used in research question 1 is that it failed to take into account other potential confounders. Other approaches such as a structure equation modelling approach would be more theoretical and technically sound and the limitations of using simple correlation coefficients should be acknowledged in the discussion.

3. For the research questions 2, the using the simple t-test and ANOVA approaches are severely limited. A multiple linear regression approach may be a much better alternative as it will incorporate professional group, management role, working setting as well as
other important confounding factors such as age, gender, years of working experience in mental health setting to adjust for the important covariates. These adjustment could potentially change the findings and discussions of the paper.

4. In summary, despite that the authors have collected some important data in the Australian mental health setting, there were serious limitation in the study design and analyses which may limit the importance of its findings.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.
No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.
No

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