Author's response to reviews

Title: The cross-national epidemiology of social anxiety disorder: Data from the World Mental Health Survey Initiative

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Dear Dr. Recchioni,

RE: BMED-D-16-01441: The cross-national epidemiology of social anxiety disorder

Thank you for your email dated 10 January, and for the helpful comments of the reviewers. We have revised the manuscript accordingly, as follows:
Reviewer 1

The reviewer noted that this “is a very well-written article”, and that “the paper is important, as such large surveys covering many countries of the world have not been conducted before”. In addition, the reviewer noted that “the applied statistical methods are sound”.

The reviewer provided an excellent sentence on prevalence rates for the abstract, which we have now added.

As suggested by the reviewer, the PROC used in SAS (i.e., PROC LIFETEST) to generate the AOO curves is now provided.

Reviewer 2

The reviewer stated that the authors “present very important and interesting data”, that “they are to be commended for choosing important angles in the analyzing the data”, and that “the detailed analysis of role impairment associated with SAD offers new insights”.

As suggested by the reviewer, we have expanded the discussion of the issue of increased prevalence of SAD in higher income countries, as well as the discussion of the relevance of impulse control disorders to SAD.

As suggested by the reviewer, we have added prevalence estimates to the abstract.

As suggested by the reviewer, we have defined and used the term “low/lower middle income country” throughout.

As suggested by the reviewer, “psychiatric comorbidity” and “psychiatric disorder” are replaced by “mental disorder comorbidity” and “mental disorder”.

As suggested by the reviewer, the first paragraph now includes specific prevalence numbers, in order to allow comparison with data in the current paper. Note, however, that the NCS-R data is part of the current data, and we have therefore not provided a great deal of information at this point in the paper.

As suggested by the reviewer, p6 line 19-20 is now clarified.

As suggested by the reviewer, p6 line 39 is now fleshed out in more detail.

As suggested by the reviewer, the section on samples on p7 now specifically refers to Table 1 for more detail. “Murcia” in Table 1 refers to a specific survey that was undertaken in this region.

As suggested by the reviewer, the concordance rate of the CIDI with the SCID is now provided on p7.
The reviewer suggests that the CIDI is based on ICD-10 criteria, but in fact the CIDI also provides DSM-IV diagnoses: these are the focus of the current paper.

As suggested by the reviewer, prevalence rates are now provided in the text, as are numbers for proportions of impairment.

We have checked that Table 2 explains both a) and b). We have elected not to reduce Table 3 and 5 further, so that data provided here can be compared with that provided for other disorders in the World Mental Health Surveys.

As suggested by the reviewer, Figure 1 has been revised to facilitate easy reading.

We have elected to begin the discussion with the limitations section, in keeping with other papers from the World Mental Health Surveys Initiative.

The reviewer raised the question of the NCS-R lifetime prevalence rates. Lifetime prevalence rates for SAD in this study are the same as those for the NCS-R (i.e., the USA survey in the WMHS collaboration is the NCS-R; this is noted in Table 1).

As suggested by the reviewer we now consider in more detail why SAD may differ across countries and across income categories: we note that it is unclear whether such differences represent artefactual variation across surveys, or whether such differences represent cross-national variation in underlying mechanisms.

As suggested by the reviewer, we provide figures on p15 line 31.

Editorial Policies

We have ensured that the manuscript adheres to all editorial requirements. We have also rewritten the limitations section, in order to avoid overlap with the limitations section of our previous article in BMC Medicine.

Thank you again for the helpful comments of the reviewers. We believe that the revisions have further strengthened the manuscript, and hope that it is now acceptable for publication.

Sincerely,

Dan J. Stein