Reviewer’s report

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

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 15 Dec 2016

**Reviewer:** Babette Renneberg

**Reviewer’s report:**

The authors present very important and interesting data on the epidemiology of SAD across the globe. They are to be commended for choosing important angles in analyzing the data. Especially the detailed analysis of role impairment associated with SAD offers new insights on how SAD affects lives of individuals in different countries.

The introduction and discussion sections of the manuscript are very brief and could, at some points, benefit from explaining important theoretical aspects (e.g., why SAD is more prevalent in higher income countries or the role of impulse control disorder in SAD).

Specific points:

**Abstract:**

It would be good to include the actual numbers of life-time prevalence rates of SAD.

"Low-lower middle income countries" not clear "low/lower middle income" instead? Please specify throughout the manuscript

Although frequently used, "psychiatric" comorbidities as well as "psychiatric" disorders is the wrong term - it is not a disorder of psychiatry but rather a mental disorder, this should be corrected throughout the manuscript

**Introduction:**

p.6, first paragraph: The authors should include numbers, e.g. prevalence rates, age of onset, percentage of comorbidity to facilitate the comparison with results of the current study.

p.6: lines 19-20: Unclear. I do not understand whether this means that the aforementioned studies did not screen for SAD in a systematic way? or whether SAD is also highly prevalent in clinical populations?

p.6, line 39. A description in what way SAD can be viewed as a Western construct should be provided.
Methods

p 7, sample recruitment. Please refer to table 1 and state that recruitment procedures are described in detail. And also, why was Murcia listed as an extra region within Spain? It does not seem to be different from the rest of Spain in any obvious way.

p.9 line 35: What was the concordance rate for SCID and CIDI?

Why do the authors refer to DSM-IV SAD and DSM-IV comorbid disorders when the applied diagnostic instrument is based on ICD 10 (CIDI)?

Results

Authors should present results in more detail in the text, e.g. mentioning significant differences in prevalence rates and not only refer to the relevant tables.

P 11: Prevalence rates: Please describe significant differences in the text

P 12, line 43 ff. it would be better to also provide numbers in the text for proportion of social impairment and severe relationship impairment

Table 2: The bottom of the table only explains a), but not b)

Table 3: title should be "age of onset at selected …" this table could be condensed

Table 5: the Table is difficult to comprehend, may be reduced to the most relevant categories

Figure 1 would be easier to read with a more distinguishable color for all countries

Discussion

The authors start the discussion with the limitations of the study. While it is important to keep these limitations in mind for the interpretation it may be more informative to start the discussion with a brief summary of the main findings.

p. 15. Life-time prevalence rates for the U.S. in this study are much lower than those presented in the NCS-R. The authors should comment this and offer some explanation.

p. 15. The authors should offer some hypotheses as to why SAD is lower in low income countries. Also, prevalence rates seem to differ considerably within income categories. It would be worth mentioning and discussing this.

p.15 line 31 ff. it would be helpful to include the actual numbers (at least overall prevalence rates etc)
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.

Unable to assess

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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Acceptable

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