Author’s response to reviews

Title: Emotion regulation and its relation to symptoms of anxiety and depression in children aged 8-12 years. Does parental gender play a differentiating role?

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor

BMC Psychology

Thank you for considering the manuscript PSYO-D-17-00108R2 as potentially acceptable for publication in BMC Psychology. We hereby resubmit our manuscript “Emotion regulation and its relation to symptoms of anxiety and depression in children aged 8-12 years: Does parental gender play a differentiating role?” We appreciate the comments from the editor and reviewers. We hope that we have managed to address all the remaining issues.

Each comment is answered point by point in the following response letter, including page number and line indicating where to find the changes in the revised manuscript.

The manuscript has been approved by all the authors.

The manuscript has not been submitted or published elsewhere.
On behalf of all the authors,
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Responses to the reviewers

REVIEWER 1

Comment 1

I think the authors may have been a little too responsive to comment 9. I recommend they edit the revision to say "strengths and limitations", see p. 17, line 388. "However as children in our study were recruited on the basis of their self-reported elevated anxious and/or depressive symptoms, FURTHER RESEARCH WILL BE REQUIRED TO TEST WHETHER THESE FINDINGS GENERALISE TO THE GENERAL POPULATION".

Response to comment 1

Thank you. We absolutely agree with your recommendation, and we have rewritten the sentence, see (after this revision) p. 18, line 421 “further research will be required to test whether these findings generalize to the general population”.

Comment 2

The authors were also responsive to my suggestion about CMV. I agree with the points they make in their discussion of the existing analyses. However, I believe a little more analysis would be helpful in addressing this issue. Reviewer 2 helpfully suggested "Comment 6b: ...I wondered what the results were when mothers' ratings of emotion regulation predict fathers' ratings of childhood depression/anxiety (or vice versa)?" I believe a short analytic treatment of this issue would strengthen the conclusions that can be drawn from this ms.

Response to comment 2
We would like to thank the reviewer for advising us to do a short analytic treatment regarding this issue also previously suggested by reviewer 2. We have therefore considered this and made an additional analysis. We have included this issue in the statistical part of the manuscript, p. 12, line 261. "In addition, we conducted similar hierarchical regression analyses using reports from the opposite parent (e.g. measuring whether maternal report of emotion regulation would predict paternal report of childhood anxiety/depression or vice versa)”. The results based on the additional analyses are now reported in the manuscript, see results p. 13, line 296. ”In addition, we tested whether paternal report of emotion regulation would predict maternal report of childhood anxiety or vice versa. Paternal report of children's emotional regulation predicted maternal report of MASC only for the L/N subscale of ERC (L/N: β = 0.17, p < 0.05), ΔR² = 5.60 %, while maternal report of children's emotional regulation predicted paternal report of MASC only for the ER subscale of ERC (ER: β = -0.20, p < 0.01), ΔR² = 7.20 %”. Further see p. 14, line 316. ”In addition, we tested whether paternal report of emotion regulation would predict maternal report of childhood depression or vice versa. Paternal report of children's emotional regulation predicted maternal report of SMFQ only the L/N subscale of ERC (L/N: β = 0.38, p < 0.001), ΔR² = 14 %, while maternal report of children's emotional regulation predicted paternal report of SMFQ for both the L/N and ER subscales (L/N: β = 0.26, p < 0.001, ER: β = -0.23, p < 0.01), ΔR² = 21.9 %”.

In the discussion section we have included the following, see p. 17, line 384 “In the additional analyses using opposite parental reporters of emotion regulation and of depressive and anxiety symptoms, the levels of symptoms were negatively associated with emotion regulation, though with a slightly altered regulation profile compared using same reporters. Paternal report of anxiety symptoms in children, was associated with maternal report of ER, while maternal report of anxiety in children was associated with paternal report of LN, both results confirm the findings from the main analyses. As for depression, maternal report of depressive symptoms was associated with paternal LN, and paternal reports with both the ERC scales as reported by the mother, also a similar pattern as in the main analyses.

These findings may indicate that fathers more accurately see and report the dysregulation (LN) of emotion regulation behaviors of their depressed and anxious children as reported by mothers. While mothers see and report lack of positive emotion regulation behaviors of their anxious children as reported by fathers. Mothers also see and report both lack of positive emotion regulation and dysregulation of their depressed children, independent of whether depressive symptoms is reported by mother or father. All over, the additional analyses with opposite reporters thus strengthen the results in the present study, especially regarding ERC and depressive symptoms.”

In the abstract part we included the following information regarding the results based on the additional analyses, p. 2, line 41 “When using reports from the opposite parent, the emotion regulation difficulties were still associated with depressive and anxiety symptoms, however exhibiting somewhat different emotional regulation profiles.”
In addition, we included in the abstract to clarify, see p. 2, line 37 “When analyzing same gender reports……”

Table X is attached for information regarding the analysis requested from the reviewer, but not included in the manuscript.

Comment 3

“The authors provided helpful detail on the Paternoster test. I did wonder if testing the difference between standardised rather unstandardised coefficients might be more informative on testing the hypothesis in question. So I would be grateful if the authors could address this”

Response to comment 3

Thank you for your comment. We will try to explain our choice as follows: In different samples, it will be more correct using unstandardized regression coefficients (b) while in the same sample it will be more correct to use standardized regression coefficients (Paternoster, Brame, Mazerolle, & Piquero, 1998). In our main analyses, we therefore used a test comparing the differences between the unstandardized regression coefficients using a t-test. These analyses were only performed in our main analyses when relevant.


REVIEWER 2

The authors have responded well to my feedback and have addressed my queries adequately.

Response:

We would like to thank the reviewer for giving us positive feedback regarding the previous revision of the paper.