Reviewer’s report

Title: Music-instruction Intervention for Treatment of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: A Randomized Pilot Study

Version: 1 Date: 18 May 2018

Reviewer: A Birgitta Gunnarsson

Reviewer's report:

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There is a need for papers with this topic regarding music therapy interventions. However, the paper have to be thoroughly re-worked.

Abstract: 1) Background - I miss music therapy intervention. 2) Aim - I miss the aim. 3) Methods - introduce what to measure, but not the specific measurements, add the statistical analyzes. 4) Focus on the outcomes, and not on describing the group in detail. 5) The conclusion is too positive, when you have evaluated such a small group. 6) Keywords - have you used Mesh terms?

Background: I miss a definition of veterans, and a definition/introduction to music therapy intervention. You have to highlight the knowledge gap. Besides make the aim clearer to the readers - there must be a "red thread" from aim, to research questions, to presentation of the outcomes, and finally to the discussion.

Methods: The methods have to be re-written. Please, follow the CONSORT statement to randomized trials of nonpharmacologic treatment, throughout the study, which would be in line when you use the CONSORT flow diagram. Each measurement should be 1) introduced and referenced, then how to score, and finally how it have been validated. Power calculation?

Results: It seems questionable whether you can use multivariate regression models based on such small number of participants. Do not use such emotionally charged words like "strong evidence" in the results; you have to be more objective.

Discussion: You have to re-write your discussion of the results. Discuss your outcomes in relation to previous research/studies. The discussion of the methods; discuss the strengths and
limitations of this study in terms of intern validity, reliability, and finally extern validity/generalizability.

Conclusion: The conclusion should be related to the outcomes in relation to the aim of the study.

References: References 3 and 18 - use the journal abbreviations.

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.

Unable to assess

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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Acceptable

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