Reviewer’s report

Title: The potential role of Illness Expectations in the progression of medical diseases

Version: 0 Date: 02 May 2019

Reviewer: Ulrike Bingel

Reviewer's report:

I would like to congratulate the author to this excellent paper and the proposed model on illness expectations, which can guide future experimental and clinical research.

I have a few comments that should be addressed before publication:

1) As it stands, that title, ie. effect of expectation on disease "progression" is hardly backed up by empirical data.

The author should provide an overview regarding the evidence supporting this statement, ideally including a table or list of references.

Which diseases have been shown to be altered by expectation? Is there a difference between disease with subjective vs. objective primary outcomes?

Has this effect only been shown for acute effects, eg. the effect of expectation on acute pain or glucose levels or are there more examples of longer term effect of expectation on the longer term "course" of a disease?

2) I very much like the definition of illness expectation and that this is mainly determined by the information available to the individual. The author may want to elaborate a bit how this information can be provided with a linke to the experimental placebo/nocebo literature (i.e. verbal information, prior experience/conditioning etc.)

3) The author emphasizes the role of illness perception. Could the author explain in more detail how illness perception and expectation are linked? And are there any tools to assess an individual's treatment expectation in the clinical (or experimental) context?

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