Reviewer’s report

Title: School functioning and internalizing problems in young schoolchildren

Version: 0 Date: 16 May 2019

Reviewer: Ana Rita Goes

Reviewer's report:

In this manuscript, the authors examined a highly relevant issue, considering the importance of more holistic approaches to child wellbeing. My comments and concerns are presented bellow:

# GENERAL: I suggest a revision of the English

# GENERAL: There seems to be some confusion or at least some indefinition regarding the use of the terms "symptoms" and "problems". The presence of anxiety/depression symptoms is not equivalent to the presence of an internalizing problem unless there is a high level of symptomatology.

# INTRO: the objectives of the study don’t seem to be trully representative of the study intentions.

# INTRO: The authors do not make explicit what is the contribution/innovation of the study.

#INTRO: Internalizing problems are assumed to be more difficult to be assessed by others and the literature shows higher report rates by self-report. However, the authors do not discuss the difficulties of others in reporting these problems and the implications when establishing the rational of the study.

#METHODS: The options taken regarding the tools for the assessment of internalizing problems (distinct questionnaires for children and teachers instead of parallel forms) is questionable and may explain the results. The authors should explain these options

# DISCUSSION: I suggest a revision of the structure of the discussion. The excessive compartmentalization in subsections produces a poorly-integrated text (e.g., informant differences should be considered when discussing the results of the regression analysis; methodological limitations should be considered when discussing some results). As you may see, some of my following comments include issues discussed in specific sections but not considered in articulation with other results.
# DISCUSSION: there is not a total correspondence between the results reported on the RESULTS section and the results reported on the DISCUSSION (pp 14, Ln 315-316)

# DISCUSSION: Associations between variables reported by the same subject tend to be stronger and there may be some reporting bias. The authors should consider this.

# DISCUSSION: The authors should consider the contribution of the differences regarding teacher-report and child-report to the results. In addition, the sample characteristics should be taken in account (not a clinical sample, therefore for at least part of the children there may not be recognizable impact on functioning)

# DISCUSSION: The analysis reported does not seem to allow a definite conclusion regarding a protective effect of mother's educational level. The authors should be cautious on these kind of affirmations or make the appropriate analysis to test the suggested effect.

# DISCUSSION: the discussion regarding the effect of anxiety on the results seems quite general, not taking in account specific issues from this study, such as the sample characteristics (e.g. the level of anxiety)

# DISCUSSION: Ln 380-381 - the authors should frame this suggestion on their findings regarding the effect of gender.

# DISCUSSION: Ln 387-391 - the authors should review the explanations presented for the inexistence of gender differences on internalizing problems when considering teacher-report

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.

No

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 am able to assess the statistics

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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