Authors’ reply to Mushtaq and Minn-Din’s eletter

As Mushtaq and Minn-Din point out quite correctly in their eletter referring to our paper Schreier et al1, Bijl et al2 did not find associations between prevalence rates of any psychiatric disorder (including anxiety disorders) in children and anxiety-related symptoms in parents. However, one must be aware of several methodological differences to our investigation: the results cited by Mushtaq and Minn-Din are based on 12-months prevalence rates and multivariate logistic regression analysis additionally controlling for childhood adversities and sociodemographic characteristics. We would like to clarify, that the results of the Bijl et al paper that are much more comparable to our study and that we are actually referring to are those based on life-time prevalence rates of psychiatric disorders in children without controlling for childhood adversities and reported separately for the various offspring disorders. Here Bijl et al clearly report associations between anxiety in parents and children.

In addition, it is true that the adult children in the Bijl et al study were considerably older (18-65 years) than the offspring in the Schreier et al study (17-21 years at follow-up). We would like to add, that there are other substantial ways in which the studies differ, e.g. assessment via direct interviews1 versus family-history information.2 Nevertheless, we do not see why our claim that we confirm and extend the Bijl et al study should be problematic, especially when taking into account the low median for age at onset of anxiety disorders.3

We would also like to point out that both the Bijl et al and Schreier et al studies are community-based so that the use of the term “patients” by Mushtaq and Minn-Din is slightly misleading.


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Declaration of Interest: None