

## **Reviewer's report**

**Title:**Public stigma against family members of people with mental illness: Findings from the Gilgel Gibe Field Research Center (GGFRC), Southwest Ethiopia

**Version:2****Date:**18 December 2013

**Reviewer:**Roger Gibson

### **Reviewer's report:**

#### Major Compulsory Revisions

1. It would be useful to identify which explanations and signs of mental illness need to be modified and clarified respectively (both in the abstract and main document).
2. Details about the Gilgel Gibe Field Research Centre needed to be provided in the Methods section of the manuscript: who lives there? When did it become a research centre? What kind of research has been conducted there in the past?
3. In the Conclusion section of the Abstract, the final sentence is not supported by the findings of the study. It should be deleted.
4. There are a number of grammatical problems throughout the document. These should be corrected. Here are only a few of several examples:
  - a) In the first sentence of the third paragraph on page 3, "towards the family members" would be preferable to "to the family members"
  - b) In the penultimate line of the same paragraph, "which" should be "who"
  - c) In the second sentence of the Methods section, "54,538 population were living" should be "54,538 persons were living."
5. The background should explore in greater detail the concepts of perceived signs and explanations of mental illness. It should be made clear why it is important to explore them in this study. The expected findings should be included in the hypotheses (see item 6).
6. Hypotheses should be included at the end of the Background section. Justifications for these hypotheses should be provided in the preceding text. The rest of the paper should be centred around these hypotheses: How were they tested (Methods)? Were they supported by the findings (Results)? What are their implications (Discussion)?
7. A detailed description of the simple random sampling technique used (paragraph 1 of Methods section on page 4) is required.
8. A description of the extent to which semantic equivalence was attained with the process of translation and back translation (as described in paragraph 1 on

page 5) should be provided.

9. A description of what the logarithmic transformation (paragraph 2 on page 5) achieved, i.e. how did it make the data more amenable to analysis, should be included.

10. The Methods section should provide more details on the specific perceived explanations and signs of mental illness that were explored.

11. The Methods section should provided details on how perceived explanations and signs of mental illness were measured, e.g. what constituted higher perceived supernatural, biological and psychosocial explanations (as described in lines 4- 5 of paragraph 2 on page 7)?

12. Were biological and psychosocial explanations considered separately? If not, why not?

13. Table 2 should include a column outlining the possible range of scores for each item. It should also contain footnotes outlining the meaning of each score for each item, e.g. 1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree ...

14. A table similar to Table 2, and incorporating the modifications identified in item 13 above, should be created to include the questionnaire items, range of scores and actual scores pertaining to perceived explanations and signs of mental illness. Readers should be directed to this table at appropriate points in the Methods and Results sections.

15. Possible explanations for the study's findings need greater elaboration in the Discussion. For example, in the last few lines of paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Discussion section, the possible explanations of findings which are presented are not clearly expressed.

16. The Discussion needs to expand more on the implications of the findings and, flowing logically from the implications, on possible interventions to address undesirable outcomes.

17. The first nine lines of paragraph 2 on page 9 are results and should be moved to the Results section.

#### Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the final line of the second paragraph on page 2, there is some text that is missing. It needs to be revised.

2. In the first line of the next paragraph, reference is made to "three of the abovementioned perceived explanations" but it is not clear which three. This needs to be clarified.

3. The final sentence in the penultimate paragraph on page 3 is unclear. What does "contact to the patients" mean? What are "tested and retested"? The concepts contained in this sentence need to be more clearly expressed.

4. The caption for Table 3 should be changed. Score is not an appropriate term for the variables that are being described.

5. The regression co-efficient and p-value pertaining to psychosocial and biological explanations as outlined in line 5 of paragraph 2 on page 7 should be included.

#### Discretionary Revisions

1. In the second paragraph of the Methods section, directing the reader to Table 2 would be helpful.

**Level of interest:**An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:**Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:**No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

#### **Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.