Author's response to reviews

Title: Patterns of Treatment Seeking Behavior for Mental Illnesses in Southwest Ethiopia: A Hospital Based Study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to the reviewers

Reviewer: Pamela Wright

Minor Essential Revisions

Q1. The authors have done a good job of addressing most of the issues raised by the referees but have not quite managed to address all of them. It appears that some questions, such as the role of age in several of the points made (such as whether the younger people did not provide their own responses, but whether these were provided by caregivers) cannot be answered by the data they collected. That should be stated clearly, perhaps in the form of questions that could be answered by future research.

Response: we have obtained information about people whose age was less than 18 from caregivers. We have described about people whose ages were included in this study as follow in the methods section.

‘……Consecutive patients attending outpatient department of psychiatry with a new episode of illness during the study period were included in the study. Caregivers were interviewed whenever the mentally ill him/herself could not respond due to the illness, had expression and/or hearing problems, or whenever the patient was younger than eighteen years……’

Q2. The writing is much improved but there is still a need for a little more cleaning up of the English, including use of upper case letters in titles, for example. That is really copy editing but should still be done to make the paper look more professional. If someone helps these authors a little more, they may be able to make the final version which is worthwhile to publish exactly because so few people from the developing countries are collecting, analysing and publishing research data on mental health.

Response: we have made formatting, spelling and grammatical corrections.
Reviewer: Lars Jacobsson

Major rev.;

The text is improved a lot but there are still some issues that need to be approached.

Q1. Abstract: "Result"-The authors write that "More than half.. - That should be "Half of the patients.."

Response: Thank you now we have changed to ‘half’ only

Q2. There are still quite a number of figures that have two decimals on several places eg in the Abstract 52,14 weeks..

Response: now we have rounded all two decimal figures in the abstract, result and discussion part to one decimal place like 52.1

Q3. "Methods" -The ref. nr 13 must be wrong here.

Response: Thank you. Yes now we corrected it to be reference number 15. ‘World Health organization: WHO pathways to care. 2006’

Q4. In the end of the method part is mentioned About written consent.I think the authors should include here what they write in their comments to the review.

Response: thank you and now we have included the following statement in the methods part. ‘For literate people, they themselves read the already prepared consent. But for those who could not read, the data collectors read for them and obtained their signature or finger print to affirm their consent’

Q5. Result - "char. of study participants" about the monthly income - here should be added "family monthly income- as they say in their comments.

Response: ok we have restated as ‘family monthly income’
Q6. "mental health seeking behav." The fig 1 is still difficult to understand and it would be good if the authors would make some more comments on how to interpret the fig.

Response: now we put a key what does the solid arrow, the line arrow and broken line arrow means in the figure to make it easy for understanding as follows

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First line of contact
Second line of contact
Third line of contact
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Q7. "Determinants of delay.., As I read the table 5 it is the opposite to what is written in the text. The older people has a lower early help seeking behavior than the younger.

Response: Thank you we have restated as follows.

‘Results from the multivariate analysis showed that individuals whose age was 31-40 were 10.7 times more likely to seek treatment later than subjects under 20 years of age [OR-10.7, 95%CI (1.99, 56.99)].’

Q8. "Discussion" - in the end where they comment on the delayed treatment seeking of persons with attempted suicid - one possible explanation could be the stigma of suicide in this community with strong muslim and coptic influence – this people are hesitant to show up.

Response: Thank you. These may be the possible explanations for the delay in treatment seeking of patients who have attempted suicide and here is the modified explanation below.

‘It is possible that people who are depressed might have not sought treatment for a long time which led to a worsening of their symptoms which rendered them too depressed to attempt suicide. Another explanation could be that the majority of respondents being either Muslim or Coptic Christians which stigmatize suicide and hence people might be hesitant to show up. Nevertheless, this needs further investigation.’

Q9. References nr 4,5,6,12 and 13 are still not complete.
**Response:** now we made corrections to the references