Reviewer's report

Title: Service user and carer experiences of seeking help for a first episode of psychosis: a UK qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 21 February 2011

Reviewer: Ruth Gerson

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  None.

- Minor Essential Revisions
  1. Abstract, Methods section, 2nd line: “purposively” should probably be “purposely” (the Mirriam-Webster dictionary states that purposively means “serving or effecting a useful function though not as a result of planning or design”, which is not what the writers intended); this should be changed again in the Methods, Participants section on page 7.
  2. Page 18, 3rd paragraph, 4th sentence: “Three more service described” should read “Three more service users described.”

- Discretionary Revisions
  1. I would appreciate an expansion in the article text of the direct quotations from service users and carers, as readers may not have access to the supplementary data file. Their statements are powerful and humanize our understanding of the experience of coping with early psychosis.
  2. Page 9/page 34, Table X (should be labeled table 2): I would be interested to see how the demographics of the carer sample compares to the broader CIEIS group of carers, as shown for service users in table 1. This would be helpful in clarifying the generalizability of these results.
  3. Several carers and service users reference being “sectioned;” it would be useful for non-British readership and non-mental health practitioners if you could footnote what that entails.
  4. Were there any ethnic differences in the experiences (particularly of stigma or response from community groups or professionals) of the service users and carers?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.