Reviewer’s report

Title: Five-year mortality in a cohort of people with schizophrenia in rural Ethiopia.

Version: 1 Date: 7 September 2011

Reviewer: Maosheng Ran

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting research which focuses on mortality of patients with schizophrenia in Ethiopia. It is very important to explore the mortality of patients with schizophrenia in low and middle income (LAMIC) countries, particularly in Africa. One of the strengths of this study include the 5-year follow-up the patients on monthly basis. I also have a few comments as following.

1. In many other studies, the proportion of male and female patients with schizophrenia at baseline might be quite similar. In this study, the proportion of male and female patients with schizophrenia at baseline was quite different (307 cases, 82.1% males). It should be interesting to know the reasons.

2. The subjects in this study included patients in urban and rural areas of Ethiopia. Table 1 and Table 2 show the characteristics of patients with schizophrenia in rural and urban areas. It should be better to mention ‘people with schizophrenia in Ethiopia’, but not only ‘people with schizophrenia in rural Ethiopia’. So the title of this study may be changed as ‘Five-year mortality in a cohort of people with schizophrenia in Ethiopia’.

3. For comparison between rural and urban area, the number of deceased in urban area is relatively too small.

4. In general, we don’t know how long the patients with schizophrenia should take the medication. Therefore it is hard to say whether ‘Treatment with antipsychotics for less than 50% of the follow-up time’ is a good variable to explore.

5. ‘…This belief prevailed for a long time until reports started to emerge from LAMIC countries which challenged the idea that schizophrenia might not run a benign course in these countries [13-14]…’. Dr. Ran and his colleagues (reference No 24) in China also challenged the axiom in an early stage. It should be better to add the reference of Dr. Ran’s study (reference No 24) here.

6. The results of this study indicated that those who lived in rural areas had less mortality compared with those living in urban areas. It should be interesting to know the reasons.

7. Are there any specific cultural factors which may be helpful to explain the different mortalities in Ethiopia?

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