Reviewer's report

**Title:** Preventing compulsory admission to psychiatric inpatient care through psycho-education and crisis focused monitoring

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 7 March 2012

**Reviewer:** Thomas Kallert

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a very interesting study protocol in a clearly underresearched area. The intervention programme to be assessed is of high clinical relevance. The paper is well written. I would like to recommend publication if the authors address the following four points

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. The term “compulsory admission” is context-dependent. Therefore, it needs a detailed explanation and a reference demonstrating the relevant national mental health legislation.

2. It is not fully clear, why the authors did vote in their design for a block random allocation instead of a randomisation patient by patient. The last option would make the study stronger, particularly because a “individualised psycho-educational instruction etc.” is performed and assessed.

3. I can not fully understand the basis of the power calculation. The authors emphasize that reduction of the mean length of compulsory inpatient time will be the main outcome parameter. In my understanding, only a proportion of the study sample (as defined by the outlined inclusion and exclusion criteria) will be at risk for future compulsory admissions, and the power calculation should be based on this proportion. Thus the planned sample size would be only the sub-population bearing this specific risk, and the number of participants to be included would be higher depending on the risk estimation the authors would propose for future compulsory admissions.

4. why don’t the authors use the “ladder of coercion” for assessing perceived coercion? This would increase comparability with other projects.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I know some of the authors for years, and have collaborated with the colleagues in several initiatives.
Apart from this, I declare that I have no competing interests.