Reviewer's report

Title: Barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking for young elite athletes. A qualitative study

Version: 2 Date: 29 May 2012

Reviewer: Amy Morgan

Reviewer's report:

This paper is a well-written and detailed qualitative analysis of help-seeking for mental health problems in young elite sportspeople. I have the following comments and suggestions for improvement:

Minor Essential Revisions

1. More detail about participants and how they were recruited is needed, as recommended by guidelines on reporting qualitative research (e.g. Tong et al. 2007. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. International Journal for Quality in Health Care 19: 349-357.) Please give a breakdown of which sports were represented in the sample. How was the study advertised – was it clear that the discussion would be around mental health problems, as this may have influenced who participated. If possible provide details around how many people refused to participate or dropped out. Also, did the author ask whether participants had experienced a mental health problem or sought help for one in the past?

2. Add the reference on which the vignette was based to the main body of the paper, rather than the additional file, so that it is included in the reference list.

3. The description of the analysis strategy is brief and somewhat confusing. Please provide more information on how themes were developed, e.g. did only one person code the data (this may impact the credibility of the analysis)? Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?

Discretionary Revisions

1. Some more information about the AIS and how it works would be beneficial for non-Australian readers (e.g. athletes receive scholarships to live and train at the institute, what facilities are available to support athletes, etc).

2. The results section would be easier to read if the author better distinguished between participant quotes and her text.

3. Would the author like to comment further on the implications of the research for work being done in the community to improve the mental health literacy of athletes and their coaches/family/friends, e.g. beyondblue and Mental Health First Aid?
Minor issues not for publication:
1. 9th line under Stigma in the Background, “female athletes attitudes” should be “female athletes’ attitudes”
2. 6th line under Methods: should be “three focus groups”
3. There is a typo in the 3rd line under Focus group methods in the Methods section
4. There is a typo in the 11th line under Facilitators in the Discussion section

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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