Reviewer's report

Title: Internalised stigma among patients with schizophrenia in a low income country: a cross-sectional facility-based study

Version: 1 Date: 16 June 2012

Reviewer: David Roe

Reviewer's report:

Title
Please change the wording from "in a low income country to "in Ethiopia" since the study was held in Ethiopia only, and this country does not necessarily represents all low incomes countries.

Abstract
Methods: Please do not use the original full name of the hospital participants were admitted at in order to protect their identity.

Results: Number of participants as well as their description should appear in the method section and not in the results section.

Conclusion: Please use better words to describe your sample rather than "this group". The last sentence of the conclusion section in the abstract sounds a bit detached and unrelated to the former parts of the abstract (re Internalised stigma and adherence). Please make sure to refer it in one of these sections: background, objective and/or results or rather omit it from the conclusion section of the abstract.

Key words
Please delete "sub-Saharan Africa" from the list.

Introduction
Page 4 paragraph 1: Please change the word "all" to "many". Please provide update reference to support your claim in the first sentence of this paragraph. Please change the word "sufferer" to an acceptable PC term such as "a person with severe mental illness".

Page 4 paragraph 2: This paragraph should be united with the previous one.

Page 4 paragraph 3: Please provide an appropriate reference to support your claim in the first sentence. Please describe/explain/give example(s) to "worse outcomes" in the second sentence (maybe better to describe as "negative outcomes"). The third sentence is not true. In the last years, the field of studying self-stigma has quite expanded. Please note that you are basing your statement on only one reference from 2007. Since then, a number of studies have been published. Below are some examples of more literature re self-stigma among persons with SMI:


On line 5 (abstract 3, page 1) you are contradicting what you wrote on line 3. Please provide examples for research of self stigma on western/high income countries.

Also, it seems like author were confused between stigma and internalized stigma.

Page 5 paragraph 2: Please provide example(s) to the essentiality of stigma assessment to recovery process in mental illness.

Objectives

Page 6 paragraph 1: Please delete the full name of the hospital research took place at. See previous comment in the abstract section. In the last sentence
("...to explore the potential impact of stigma on medication adherence and risk behavior... the recovery process"), the authors mentioned for the first time terms that were not previously discussed in the introduction or literature review such as meds adherence, risk behavior and recovery. Please revise your introduction to include this variable as well.

Methodology

Study design and setting
Page 7: Please delete all indentifies details about the setting/hospital the study took place at (see precious comments on this matter). Please delete last sentence. This paragraph includes information about setting only. It does not include any information regards the study design. Please revise this section and add the missing information.

Participants
Page 7: The current participants section is more appropriate to be used as a study design (see precious comment). In the participants section should appear demographic information and an anonymous description of participants.

Assessment
Page 7: How was the translation process been done? Please provide the missing info. Factor analysis of the new translated scale is needed to appear in the text (or at least to be reported) to know whether the translated version has received same or different factors than the original.

Page 8: First sentence- a dot is missing: "resistance. The". Why didn’t the authors use a well known established scale to assess suicide tendency? We are not sure that simply asking patients in a hospital setting about their suicide attempts may yield a reliable answer. Therefore we are not sure how much this assessment is reliable.

Results
The demographic data should appear in text or tables, but there is no need for this info to overlap both in tables and texts.
The comparison between the study data to the European data is not valid.

Discussion
Page 13 first paragraph: There is no need to present percentages. Please summarize very briefly all your major and significant results.

Page 13 first paragraph: Please provide references to support your statement on the pioneering of this study in Ethiopia and Africa.

Page 13-14- comparison to European data: The authors should be very cautious with their comparisons to the European data.

Page 14 last paragraph: Recovery is not identical to meds adherence. The authors should use the "meds adherence" and its relation to self stigma and not recovery.
Page 15 first paragraph: Please do not mix between self stigma (or family stigma) of person with schizophrenia/smi to self stigma of the person with the illness. Since authors did not refer to family self stigma in their intro, they can chose to refer it in the conclusion but further elaborate on this issue. The same goes for psychotic symptoms- authors did not assessed it or discussed it before so they should first add the missing information and only than discuss it in more details in the discussion section.

Conclusions
The last sentence "Particular attention should be paid to the potential for self-stigma to inhibit help seeking and treatment adherence" is not derived from the paper. Please delete.

**Level of interest:** An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests