Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: ilanit Hasson-Ohayon

Reviewer's report:

Dear Prof Lysaker,

Thank you for sending me the paper entitled “Internalised stigma among patients with schizophrenia in a low income country: a cross-sectional facility-based study” to review. In this paper, the authors use data collected from 212 persons with schizophrenia to study the extent and correlates of internalized stigma. The paper deals with an important and interesting issue that has clinical implications. However, the paper needs further substantial work in order to improve its clarity and its contribution to the field. In addition, the statistics that was applied is not clear and it’s difficult to follow up the logic and rationale for conducting the various analyses. Below are few comments that I suggest to address:

Major revisions:

1. The paper needs editing to improve the English. Many sentences are not clear (for example: first sentence in abstract – the word ‘its’ seems to be missing between despite and potential) and the text is hard to follow. In addition, the word internalized is written with s instead of z.

2. The statistics that was applied is not clear and it’s difficult to follow up the logic and rationale for conducting the various analyses.

3. There seems to be confusion between public stigma and personal/internalized stigma and focus of the study on internalized stigma might be better placed in the introduction and objectives sections.

4. The assessment of the relationship between self stigma and adherence is limited when this association is asked directly with a simple question. This limitation should be addressed and accordingly conclusions might be spelled out more cautiously.

Minor revisions:

1. First page of the introduction, last paragraph is not clear: to what other groups the authors refer to? Also – it would be beneficial to elaborate regarding the results of the studies that are reviewed.

2. In the objectives section the statement “…explore the potential impact…” might be misleading since the study is cross-sectional.

3. In method, exclusion criteria are mentioned. However, it is not clear how these
criteria were assessed.

4. Please provide alphas for all subscales of the ISMI.

5. In the results section referring to tables is missing. Also, the first sentences repeat the method.

6. In results: what does it mean that most participants had indications of severe mental illness?

7. Last page of results: the sentence “….most important factor…” is an over statement since no other factors were examined in this study. In the same page the sentence “not shown in table 4” is not clear – wither show in table or delete this sentence.

8. Also in results – it is not clear how the side effects were assessed.

9. In the discussion the authors refer to the relationship between self stigma and level of education. Discussing literature on this issue might be beneficial.

10. Second page of discussion, first paragraph, last sentence – what is meant by “the nature of stigma also….”.

11. Please provide rationale for excluding people with impaired insight.

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

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

i declare that i have no competing interests.