Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 27 June 2012

Reviewer: Jamie Ringer

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This paper by Assefa et al, regarding the prevalence of internalized stigma in Ethiopia is a timely, scholarly and relevant one. It will aid in understanding of internalized stigma, potentially help support education about stigma, and could serve as a baseline measure of internalized stigma prior to anti-stigma campaigns the authors propose will be initialized in the area. Internalized stigma is related to recovery, quality of life, and treatment adherence and is clearly relevant for identifying impediments to recovery from schizophrenia.

The revision of the ISMI into Amharic seems to have been done thoughtfully and cautiously. The comparison offered between this study and the Brohan study of a European population is interesting and provides a thoughtful comparison group.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Despite the many strengths of the study, there were some areas where clarification is needed. When describing the exclusionary criteria, the authors said that “individuals with a significant level of cognitive impairment…” were excluded, however they did not explain how cognitive functioning was determined. Additionally, they excluded patients with "impaired insight". No mention is made of what criteria were used to exclude these persons.

The discussion section explains that the participants in the study have socio-economic variables that are more similar to patients from Europe than patients from low-income countries. Despite this finding, the researchers use the results in both the discussion and conclusion sections to make claims about stigma in low-income countries. Perhaps some clarification can be made regarding the specific participants in the study and how this group might compare to the population as a whole in terms of income, education, etc.

Finally, in the conclusion section, the authors recommend that there is a need to incorporate culturally appropriate methods of addressing internalized stigma into rehabilitation treatment…do the authors have any suggested methods for doing so?

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