Reviewer's report

Title: "Do European psychiatry trainees base clinical decisions on evidence?"
Decision-making and antipsychotic choice in European trainees - a cross-sectional survey of the European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees’ Research Group

Version: 2 Date: 14 November 2011

Reviewer: Stefan Priebe

Reviewer's report:

I think the revision has substantially improved the clarity and quality of the paper. Given the limitations of the study, the analysis of the data, the presentation of the findings, and the discussion of the implications appear appropriate.

I have only a few comments on the editing of the paper:

• The title is too long and somewhat confusing. The term “trainee” features three times, and there is no need to specify in the title who conducted the study. I suggest a briefer and more precise title such as “Choice of antipsychotic treatment options among psychiatric trainees across Europe” or something similar. If the authors want to specify the study method in the title, the term “survey” may be mentioned.

• There should be a consistent terminology for the subjects of the research. I suggest using “trainees” rather than “physicians”.

• Who conducted the study is not part of the background. If the authors are very keen to have the name of their group in the abstract, it should be in the Methods.

• With respect to the Results in the abstract, the term “surprisingly” should be dropped. Whether something is surprising or not, is a matter for the Discussion, but not part of reporting the Results.

• At the end of the second paragraph in the Background, the authors say that atypical antipsychotics were more expensive. In fact, producing them is not much more expensive than producing first-generation antipsychotics. They were just more highly priced by the drug companies. This may sound like hair-splitting, but is relevant since some of the second-generation antipsychotics will get “much cheaper” when available as generics.

• In the first paragraph of the Methods, the authors say that the questionnaire was “anonymous”. This is not correct. The questionnaire contained data on the individual respondent which – at least in theory - would have made the respondent identifiable. The later analysis of the aggregate dataset may have been anonymised, but the questionnaires in data collection were not (at most they were ‘pseudo-anonymised’). This should be described with a precise terminology.

• In the inclusion criteria, it is stated that partners in each country aimed at
recruiting a representative sample. This is clearly not the case. Using a mere convenience sample is no disgrace, but it should be stated clearly and the word “representative” should be deleted from the manuscript (other than in the list of limitations when the lack of representativeness maybe mentioned). In the Discussion it is repeated that efforts were made to recruit a sample “that was felt to be representative”. Probabilistic sampling ensuring representativeness is not a matter of feeling, but of a rigorous research methodology which was simply not applied in this study. In the next sentence the term “validity of a sample” should also be dropped (a sample as such cannot be “valid”).

• In the qualitative analysis, the reader should be told how many respondents provided any information at all so that the absolute numbers of contents can be interpreted.

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

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

**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