Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of family members' psycho-educational intervention on burden of caregivers and psychiatric symptoms of patients with schizophrenia in Shiraz, Southern of Iran

Version: 3 Date: 10 December 2011

Reviewer: Michelle P. Salyers

Reviewer's report:

Although the authors have made some changes, this version of the paper still has many of the problems pointed out in the earlier reviews.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. All of the reviewers commented on the context and relative importance of this study in the Iranian context. One of the other reviewers even pointed to specific literature, however those studies are still not included in the introduction. The authors cited another study by Mottaghipour (in Australia?) but not the studies that address family psychoeducation (and other issues of family) in Iran.

2. In response to reviewers, the authors describe their study as being different because of being based on patient and family needs, but what that really means and how that is important is not clearly described in the text.

3. The description of the study intervention is improved, but the issue of fidelity to the intervention was still not addressed.

4. The internal consistencies of those subscales of the subscales in this sample are still not shown (despite two reviewers requesting it)

5. Last time I wrote that “given the small sample and the trend level of significance for baseline differences of education and marital status, the analyses should be redone, controlling for these factors. This is particularly important as education could be a clear factor in the outcomes.” In the response letter, the authors refer to table 2, but do not describe controlling for any covariates in the paper.

6. Aim3, the correlations, are not describe in the results section, but are discussed in the discussion section. If they remain part of the study, the findings should appear in the results.

7. The discussion section suggests that the improvements in patient outcomes in the treatment group may be due to increasing compliance. In the methods section the authors now say that family members were asked to report on compliance. This data should be analyzed to see if it supports the supposition in the discussion section.
8. The limitations are underdeveloped. For example, the design is unable to determine whether effects due to social support versus active intervention.

- Minor Essential Revisions

9. This first paragraph of the discussion repeats sentences from the introduction verbatim. This should be changed. Also, the description of the Malakouti study is not integrated with the current study findings. The relevance of that study in this paragraph is unclear (and it should probably be described in the introduction as contextual information related to Iranian mental health work).

10. The references are still not formatted consistently. The added text needs editing. There were several typos.

**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'