Reviewer’s report

Title: Perceived Causes of Severe Mental Illnesses and Preferred Treatment for the Mentally Ill among the Borana Semi-Nomadic Community, Southern Ethiopia.

Version: 1 Date: 9 April 2012

Reviewer: Susan Rees

Reviewer’s report:

This study provides important knowledge about this particular group of nomadic people and their knowledge and beliefs about mental disorder. In particular the paper describes a complex understanding of the causes of disorder. The implications for practice and interventions are well described, and indicate the need for more accessible services that incorporate western and traditional options for care. The study highlights some important areas of convergence with western psychiatric understanding from the perspective of traditional identification, for example, particular periods of vulnerability to disorder related to pregnancy, post natal disorders, and war trauma. The question posed by the authors is well defined and the limitations clearly acknowledged. The qualitative methods are appropriate and well described, including the use of supporting quotes from the data. The discussion and conclusion are appropriate and make a useful contribution, in particular, indicating specific knowledge for interventions with this group and others where traditional as well as western interventions are considered valuable. The finding related to access and economic factors influencing the choice of care is valuable. The writing is acceptable although I noted a few typographical errors.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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