Reviewer's report

Title: The copycat phenomenon after two Finnish school shootings: an adolescent psychiatric perspective

Version: 2 Date: 24 May 2012

Reviewer: Roland Weierstall

Reviewer's report:

Dear Drs. Lindberg, Sailas, & Kaltiala-Heino,

thanks a lot for thoroughly addressing all points I made. The manuscript is more scientifically sound now. I support the publication of this manuscript and hope that other researchers also recognize it as a valuable contribution to the study of school massacres. However, as major parts were rewritten, I have one mayor point you should address that I haven’t specified in the first review. Moreover, I would also like to make a few remarks you can consider:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Abstract, Conclusion: “they can be characterized psychotic”. This conclusion is too strong. You should rather say that they showed more psychotic symptoms and traumatic experiences than the normal population.

Discretionary Revisions:

Methods, variables: This section is very long. I would suggest providing headings for the different measures. This would make it much easier for the reader to orient themselves in the manuscript.

Results, Table 3: You could save lines by presenting the categories ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘not clear from files’ in columns and the frequencies for every item (if possible) in one line. I think this would make it easier to get all relevant information at once.

Results, Table 5&6: There are very many numbers for the prevalences. I suggest to either present relative OR absolute frequencies, but both are a lot of information to cope with as a stressed reader. Maybe percentages are preferable.

Results, Table 5: It would be helpful if you group the symptoms and maybe add some captions.

Discussion: You should also think about providing headings in the discussion section; e.g. “bullying and social exclusion”.

Minor Essential Revisions:

There were a few misspellings in the ms. Please read it carefully again.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.