Author's response to reviews

Title: Assessments of mental capacity in psychiatric inpatients: a retrospective cohort study

Authors:

Penelope F Brown (penelope.brown@kcl.ac.uk)
Alex D Tulloch (alex.tulloch@kcl.ac.uk)
Charlotte Mackenzie (charlotte.mackenzie@kcl.ac.uk)
Gareth S Owen (gareth.1.owen@kcl.ac.uk)
George Szmukler (george.szmukler@kcl.ac.uk)
Matthew Hotopf (matthew.hotopf@kcl.ac.uk)

Version: 2 Date: 31 March 2013

Author's response to reviews:

Dear Prof Emmelkamp,

Re: Assessments of mental capacity in psychiatric inpatients: a retrospective cohort study, Penelope F Brown, Alex D Tulloch, Charlotte Mackenzie, Gareth S Owen, George Szmukler and Matthew Hotopf

Thank you for your e-mail regarding the acceptance of the above article for publication in BMC Psychiatry.

We have made all the essential revisions as requested.

Regarding the discretionary revisions:

Referee 1:

1) The referee recommends indicating the variables associated with the likelihood of a capacity assessment being performed, including multivariate analysis of those characteristics most likely to be associated with an assessment. We agree: we are keen to examine the factors associated with the assessment of mental capacity, but due to the quantity of data and the depth of discussion surrounding this issue we have decided to present this data in a second paper rather than including it in this manuscript. This paper focuses instead on the description of the study group, the frequency of capacity assessments and the impact of the introduction of the MCA on clinical practice.

2) The referee suggests the authors provide a clearer statement on who should receive capacity assessments. We do not feel it is the purpose of this paper to be prescriptive regarding the correct frequency of capacity assessments, especially when the legal and practical guidance itself is somewhat ambiguous. Instead we have amended the conclusion to highlight when assessments are obligatory and recommended, and to emphasise that they should always be documented.

Revisions recommended by Referee 2:
A sentence has been added to the last paragraph on p5 to clarify the aims of the study. All of the minor essential revisions have been completed.

Yours sincerely

Dr Penelope Brown