Reviewer’s report

Title: Young men’s attitudes and behaviour in relation to mental health and technology: implications for the development of online mental health services

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Reviewer: Harald Baumeister

Reviewer’s report:

The present manuscript aims to explore young men’s attitudes and behavior in relation to mental health and technology use in order to inform the development of online mental health services for young men. The question posed by the authors is well defined, the methods being used are appropriate and the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found. The findings of this study are very interesting. They give relevant implications for further research and implementation opportunities of online mental health services specifically developed for young men. Thus, I would like to see this paper published. The following major and minor comments may help the authors to further strengthen their manuscript:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Methods: The methods being used are appropriate but not well described. It remains unclear how the questions were asked, e.g.: what kind of answering format were used for the questions about technology use and attitudes and behaviors in relation to mental health. The authors should indicate which answering options were provided. As a consequence, the results the authors reported were difficult to interpret and thus cannot be replicated.

2. Quote (conclusion section): “This study suggests that there are powerful views towards mental health and help seeking that are gender specific.” As you didn’t have a control group consisting of girls in the same age, this conclusion is not supported by your data. Why didn’t you compare the quantitative data between young men and young women? At least for the online sample a gender comparison would lead to more information about your research question. Concerning the qualitative data, you can explicitly refer to literature focusing on gender differences that can support this assumption.

3. In the discussion section, two minor limitations of the study were listed. However, the most crucial limitation was not mentioned: the risk of biases that occur by using online snowball-sampling and focus groups. Whereas the snowball-method was used to pre-vent from social desirability and group processes, those processes were the profound-est thread for the results in the focus groups. As mentioned above, the authors need to report the methodological process in a more detailed way. The sentence (methods section) “Participants were also asked at times to respond individually to questions by writing their answers down on a piece of paper” shows that it is unclear, for which
specific questions the participants were asked to write down their thoughts and ideas. The issues the participants had to discuss are sometimes very personal and as young men tend not to talk about private topics, the method of focus groups might be highly contraindicated. Therefore, it is important to indicate when the participants were able to write down their own thoughts so it can be assumed that the answers were not influenced by the others in the focus group.

4. Conclusions: With regard to the great amount of your data, the conclusion section is quite short and scanty. You should provide more details/ideas of how the high use of technology in combination with a great lack of knowledge and negative attitude towards mental health can be used to develop online mental health services for young men. Moreover, the discussion and conclusion sections need to aggregate the findings on a higher meta-level by e.g. discussing the problem of what is regarded as “in” today might soon be “so last year”. Suggestions, theories or models of how to handle such challenges would help to further improve the present research and health care area. For providing your suggestions about how to conceptualize online mental health services for young men you can for example use the Internet-supported interventions cat-egorization/definition model by Barak et al. (Barak, A., Klein, B., Proudfoot, J.G. (2009). Defining internet-supported therapeutic interventions. Ann Behav Med 38, 4–17.). As yet, the manuscript focuses too much on its details and partly fails to provide substantial new insights, theories or health care solutions in the discussion and conclusion sections.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Quote (results section): “The vast majority of males reported that they use mobile phones (96.3%), Ipod/mp3 players (88.5%), and computers (desktops, 80.1%; laptops, 81.6%) (see Table 2). More than half of the sample identified that they play video games (playstation, 53.0%; Nintendo/Wii, 49.9%; XBox, 51.0%).” It might be enough to just report young men’s usage of technology that is related to online mental services such as mobile phones and computers.

2. Quote (results section): “Firstly, consistent with previous research (Booth et al., 2004) (…)” Inconsistent citing as you gave numbers in other sections (e.g. “Young men in Australia have poorer mental health than their female counterparts including higher rates of completed suicide, antisocial behaviour, and alcohol and substance misuse problems [1]”).

3. Quote (results section): “Nevertheless, depression was correctly identified in all but two focus groups as a common mental health condition for young people (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007).” Inconsistent citing.

4. Quote (results section): “(…) a finding that is consistent with previous research7,8,9.” Inconsistent citing.

5. Quote (results section): “In line with previous research, most participants indicated the need for online information and support services to be an anonymous process and fears of being identified when seeking help were key themes when the value of seeking information and support online was discussed.
(Stefanic, 2008).” Inconsistent citing.

6. The paragraphs about Facebook, My Space, Twitter etc. reads somewhat like a Facebook promotion.

**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’