Reviewer's report

Title: A multicenter randomized controlled trial of aftercare services for Severe Mental Illness: study protocol

Version: 2 Date: 30 October 2012

Reviewer: Barbara J. Burns

Reviewer's report:

This fine paper on aftercare services in Iran is a solid example of the Ministry to conduct a study which could have policy implications when study results become available. Exquisite attention was given to research ethics, to consideration about the set of interventions included based on prior research, to measures selected, and to power considerations for statistical analysis. The paper communicates a state-of-the-art study and readers will want to know the study results in the near future.

There are no major compulsory revisions noted by this reviewer.

Minor compulsory revisions are: (1) the rationale for not including medication delivery/supervision should be provided since a critical influence, at least for ACT, in preventing psychiatric hospitalizations; and (2) an analysis plan based on three groups (less compliant and more compliant in the experimental arm) and the control group could be provided.

In addition, two discretionary revisions are recommended: (3) More recent references are available on assertive community treatment (ACT) and social skills training although they may not provide findings which differ from the earlier ones cited; and (4) the follow-up strategy for the study patients is strong, but data about refusals and “loss to follow-up” could be included relevant to reader understanding of acceptability of the study and the final sample size.

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.