Reviewer's report

Title: Criteria for symptom remission revisited: a study of chronic patients affected by schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorders

Version: 1 Date: 10 July 2013

Reviewer: Kelly Buck

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes, the question is well defined. The authors have sought to compare the remission criteria for schizophrenia as developed by the Remission in Schizophrenia Working Group with other criteria in relation to functional and neurocognitive outcomes. However, the authors have failed to situate this work within the larger literature regarding recovery in schizophrenia. Objective remission criteria are obviously critical to define, however objective measures are only one part of conceptualizing recovery. For example, subjective measures are important to consider as well. I would suggest that a major compulsory change would be that the authors need to make this neglected point. Literature to review and cite would include an article by Lysaker, Roe, and Buck, (2009) “Recovery and Wellness Amidst Schizophrenia: Definitions, Evidence, and the Implications for Clinical Practice” and “The relation between objective and subjective domains of recovery among persons with schizophrenia-related disorders” by Roe and colleagues, 2011.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes, the methods are appropriate and well described.

3. Are the data sound? The data appear to be sound.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? The reporting of data adheres appropriately to standards. However, I would point out that in Table 5, the key does not appropriately identify the abbreviations and needs to be corrected (RSWG vs. SWGC).

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? The discussions and conclusions appear to be well balanced and supported by the data. This will be a meaningful and important addition to the literature regarding how to quantify remission most appropriately.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes, but please see above.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? I would suggest that the authors refrain from use of the term “chronic” and instead refer to seriously mentally ill. Chronic inherently implies that one cannot recover, which is why the term has fallen out of favor in most of the literature. Plus, the authors reference having “chronic patients” in their sample but never define what that
term actually means. In the same line, please refrain from referring to “schizophrenics” as this is also stigmatizing and neglects to acknowledge that the person is first an individual, but also one who is dealing with having an illness.

9. Is the writing acceptable? I would suggest having the ms further proofed for grammatical and typographical errors.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests