Reviewer's report

Title: Health Service Costs and Clinical Gains of Psychotherapy for Personality Disorders: A randomized controlled Trial of Day Hospital-based Step-down Treatment versus Outpatient Treatment in Specialist Practice

Version: 3 Date: 15 October 2013

Reviewer: Morten Hesse

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript needs to be seen by a statistician. I am uncertain about the reporting and interpretation, and whether assumptions for the models are met. I should probably have noted this in my first review, but like the other reviewer, I simply found the manuscript difficult to read then.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

The writing is much improved, and the manuscript appears much more accessible now.

However, some things remain to be done:

First, the text in the results section needs to be linked more clearly to tables 5 and 6, and the explanation of tables 5 and 6 needs to be improved. I assume that the coefficients in tables 5 and 6 are really coefficients, and that describing them as differences with the symbol delta means exactly that. If that is right, then overall costs differ significantly between the two treatments, and this finding needs to be commented on.

Further, the difference in employment status between APD patients in the two treatment conditions appears to be an afterthought, and is first mentioned in the discussion. The discussion, however, should not introduce new data.

Further, the manuscript seems to suggest that intensive therapies for avoidant personality disorder may be iatrogenic (in particular this comment: "However, in a recent naturalistic study of a large PD cohort, poor outcomes were found for avoidant PD patients after similar step-down treatment [27,43].", but also what follows)

These suggestions should either be removed or expanded with clarifications:
what is the nature of this evidence? How robust is it? How should it be researched further.