Reviewer's report

**Title:** Transition to adult mental health services for young people with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): A qualitative analysis of their experiences

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**Reviewer:** Moli Paul

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The paper addresses an important issue: experiences of young people with ADHD making the transition between CAMHS and AMHS. The authors point out the discrepancy between NICE guidelines and service provision and make the case for the need for such research. It is acknowledged in the field that studies of this nature are difficult to recruit to and the authors acknowledge their small sample size. Their findings are interesting but the validity of the findings are limited by a couple of key methodological issues and the structure paper needs revision in one key way:

**Major compulsory revisions**

1. The sampling strategy is not clearly articulated and it is not possible for the reader to know whether sampling was opportunistic, purposive or otherwise. The authors state that 'Participants were identified through the young person’s CAMHS clinician. Clinicians across Nottinghamshire were approached by the lead researcher (KDS) to recruit young people aged 17-years and over with a diagnosis of ADHD or psychotic illness.' It is not clear if all clinicians or only some were asked to facilitate recruitment; whether they were asked to send packs to all young people fulfilling the inclusion criteria; or what was the total number of young people with ADHD in the service reaching the transition boundary at this time. This means it is impossible to know how skewed, representative, purposive, etc the sample actually was.

   The sampling strategy should be explained in more detail in the methods section. The implications of which clinicians facilitated recruitment, which did not, is very important, especially because of the main findings about the quality of therapeutic relationships and perceived responsibility of care. More care should also be taken with the language used in relation to the recruitment of participants, e.g. the methods section on participants states 'Of the 15 ADHD participants recruited to the study, two participants did not complete the reply slip and therefore could not be contacted regarding the interview. A further three participants declined to be interviewed due to time constraints.' So, actually, only ten participants were recruited. Clarity is required about the population studied, sample size initially planned, recruitment strategy, response rate and final sample size.

2. The sample size is small. The authors make no comments about data
Saturation or related implications. Triangulation is mentioned but triangulation of data collection/interpretation seems not to have been a planned part of the paper, although authors do acknowledge that triangulation would improve the quality of the findings. It is mentioned that the data is baseline data from a 12 month CLAHRC-funded study. It is not clear whether the study continues to recruit young people through the year of the study, i.e. whether more young people might have been recruited as participants if the paper had been written at a later date. If this is the case then waiting for a larger sample size would be better rather than publishing emerging findings. If there is not scope to recruit more participants, the quality of the paper would be improved by using other data to triangulate findings. If this is not possible then it should be clearly stated.

3. The results section regularly included comparisons of the study findings with the findings of other studies. The latter should be in the discussion section.

Discretionary revisions

Not all young people with ADHD are seen at CAMHS. Many, especially when service provision demarcations differ, may be seen in child health services. What is the local service provision context and what are the implications for generalisability of findings in relation to all young people with ADHD and not just those attending CAMHS?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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'