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

Version: 1 Date: 6 December 2012

Reviewer: Martin Teicher

Reviewer's report:

The study addresses an important issue – the transition of patients with ADHD from child to adult mental health services. The study is also novel as it may be the first to explore this specific transition using qualitative analyses. However, the study is limited by the small sample interviewed which may limit the range of themes identified. Also, they need to make it very clear that the goal of qualitative research of this type is simply to identify themes for further exploration, and that this can be accomplished to a surprising degree by modest samples.

Major compulsory revisions

1. It needs to be determined what fraction of the sample population these 10 subjects represent. How many clinicians were invited to identify potential subjects? Approximately how many cases with ADHD would these clinicians be estimated to have in their care that would meet the age requirement? Do these subjects represent a random cross-sample of the surveyed population or do they differ in some systematic way (higher socioeconomic status, more educated parents)?

2. There were 10 subjects who agreed to be interviewed and 5 who were not interviewed. Were important differences noted between the 5 & 10 in their responses on the initial questionnaire? What can this tell us about the generalizability of the findings?

3. A more thoughtful discussion needs to be provided about the limitations of qualitative analyses on such a small sample. The problem is that these 10 participants can only provide information about their own experiences. Hence, there is a 35% chance that an experience that only affects 10% of individuals would not be experienced in a random sample of 10 subjects (0.9 raised to the 10th power). Similarly, there is an 11% chance of missing an experience shared by 20% of the population in a random sample of 10 participants (see http://www.quirks.com/articles/a2000/20001202.aspx for a discussion of this issue). The problem is worse if the sample is non-random. If all the participants came from one socioeconomic group then none of them may have experienced a theme prevalent amongst individuals from another socioeconomic group.

4. Keep the results and discussions separate.

Minor Revision
Spell out or describe NICE.

**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'