Reviewer's report

Title: The Maristan stigma scale: a standardized international measure of the stigma of schizophrenia and other psychoses

Version: 2 Date: 30 November 2013

Reviewer: ilanit Hasson-Ohayon

Reviewer's report:

Dear Prof. Lysaker,

Thank you for sending me the paper entitled “The Maristán stigma scale: a standardized international measure of the stigma of schizophrenia and other psychoses” to review.

In this paper, the authors use data from different countries and report a development of a new stigma scale. It is written that the scale is cultural and includes qualitative aspects. While these two points may serve as a rationale for the development of a new scale, it is not clear how the new scale is both cultural sensitive and qualitative. Therefore, the need for a new scale is not clear. Below are my detailed comments that I suggest to address:

Major comments:

1- The introduction mentioned both stigma and its various aspects and definitions, as well as self-stigma. A definition of self stigma is needed.

2- It is not clear in the introduction if the new scale address stigma or self stigma. Only in the result section it becomes clear that it includes both.

3- The introduction should better explain why there is a need for a new scale. In what way will it contribute to research on stigma. What do the authors mean by "develop an instrument to evaluate stigma in people with schizophrenia and other psychoses that would have application across cultures".

4- It is not clear in the method if the scale assess stigma among non-patients or self-stigma among patients.

5- From the description of the method it is not clear in what way the scale is qualitative. I understand it is based on qualitative interviews, but the scale itself seems to produce a number based on likret scale.

6- The scale should be included in the paper – since this is a paper on the scale. Additionally, information about the process of development of the items and rationale should be detailed in the ms and not elsewhere as written. Maybe the authors can write what is the different between ref 27 and the current paper.

7- The first paragraph of results: if the differences between countries are significant than a significant test should be reported.

8- Discussion does not address self-stigma as part of a general score of stigma.
If the instrument is used among non-patient the issue of self stigma of caregivers should also be addresses. There are studies on self-stigma of parents of persons with severe mental illness (Zisman-Illani et al, 2013, JNMD; Hasson-Ohayon et al, 2011, Com Psy).

9- The cultural aspect of the scale is not clear. Does the fact that it was developed by researchers from different countries mean it is cultural sensitive? Please elaborate on this.

10- While discussing culture and stigma it might be beneficial to address the work of Kirmayer and Corin on insight, stigma and culture.

11- In the discussion- what is meant by: "Questionnaire was hetero-managed".

12- The discussion refers to the family as a source of stigma. It might be beneficial to refer to the literature on the family of persons with severe mental illness and stigma. Again the family can both suffer from self-stigma and be stigmatizing toward the person with the illness.

13- A non-mentioned limitation is the lack of validation process (e.g. correlation with other scales).

14- The ms require professional editing. In all sections there are grammatical errors and incomplete sentences. I mention here only few for example, but all the ms needs a careful editing. e.g. abstract: based on instead of "from"; first page of introduction: most instrument that measure instead of "to measure"; page 2: developed instead of "Angermeyer et al. [21] developer". Also – few sentences are not complete, e.g.: Few researches have been multi-cultural. Please write in what were they multicultural.

Minor comments:

1- The text should include referring to the tables. e.g.: "as can be seen in table 1...", "table 2 presents....".

2- In the discussion the limitations might be better placed at the end.

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

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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