Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2
Date: 10 December 2013
Reviewer: Philip T Yanos

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript addresses an issue of importance to the field and has an ambitious scope in that it tries to develop a measure that is validated in both South America and Europe. I had a number of concerns with the manuscript and the approach taken to validating the measure.

Major Compulsory Revisions

First, the introduction of the manuscript gives a vague definition of the different aspects of the stigma construct, which further translates into a vagueness about what aspect the measure is designed to measure. At this point, I think that the literature is clear that we cannot simply say that we're measuring "stigma." There is: 1) anticipated stigma/awareness of community stigma, 2) discrimination/rejection experiences, and 3) self-stigma (which also consists of a few elements, including stereotype agreement and alienation). While I understand that the authors based their measures on a series of focus groups, it's not clear what aspect of the stigma construct they ultimately decided to measure. The introduction should be revised so that this is more clear.

With regard to the actual study, it is impressive that the measure was administered in 6 countries, but I don't know if the sample size was big enough to allow for adequate comparisons between the countries. The authors should discuss whether they had enough power to conduct between country comparisons. It is also impressive that they assessed test-retest reliability, but I think a more important assessment at this stage concerns construct validity, as would be assessed by examining convergent and discriminant correlations with measures of related and unrelated constructs. The authors should discuss why they did not decide to incorporate this type of validation and acknowledge this as a limitation.

Discretionary Revisions

Overall, it seems that the measure is largely a measure of discrimination/rejection experience (in 3 different domains), so it is unclear why the 2 self-stigma items were included and if 2 items really provides an adequate measure of this construct (especially since a few other established measures of self-stigma exist). I wonder if these 2 items should really be kept.

Minor Essential Revisions

Overall the manuscript is reasonably well-written, however, it has some odd
phrases which make it difficult to understand ("quail-quantitative"; "hetero-managed"). Using more straightforward terms would make the manuscript more understandable to a general audience.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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.