Author's response to reviews

Title: First-episode psychosis and migration in Italy (PEP-Ita migration): a study in the Italian mental health services

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Version: 8 Date: 5 April 2014

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Reviewer: Gerard A Hutchinson

Reviewer's report:

The only additional revision which is minor but essential would be additional detail on how the controls would be recruited, e.g. numbers, matching, and timing.

In the latest version of the paper, we had explicited the 4 inclusion criteria for migrants (DSM-IV diagnosis of psychotic episode; age between 18 and 64; residency in the study area of the involved mental health centres; valid informed consent); then we had stated that inclusion criteria for native controls were the same as for migrants, including the recruitment period (1 January 2012 – 31 December 2013). Following the reviewer’s comment, we now give additional detail on the recruitment of native controls, explaining that their number can’t be predicted until the recruitment process is concluded, that controls will not be matched (because of the 4 recruitment criteria indicated above) and that the timing is the same as for migrants.

“The inclusion criteria for control native patients are the same as migrants: thus, all native patients consecutively presenting a first-episode psychosis and admitted to the designated psychiatric services for each study centre in the recruitment period (1 January 2012 - 31 December 2013) will be recruited as controls. Because of these recruitment criteria, control native patients will not be matched to migrant patients, and we will not be able to predict the number of controls until the recruitment process is concluded.”

Also the definition of a migrant seems to include internal migrants as well, should clarify this.

We thank the reviewer for this suggestion: actually our definition of migrants could look incomplete. We now specify that our study includes only international migrants.

“As the World Health Organization, we define “migrants” people who move from one area to another for varying periods of time and reasons [34]; specifically, with “first-generation migrants” we mean people who were born in a foreign country and have moved to Italy for any period or reason: thus we refer to international migrants and not to internal ones.”