Reviewer's report

**Title:** Inclusion completed! Recruitment barriers and strategies to overcome them in a randomized controlled trial for people with schizophrenia.

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 19 June 2013

**Reviewer:** Lucio Ghio

**Reviewer's report:**

The authors presented a paper addressing the problem of recruitment in schizophrenia trials. This issue is crucial and worthy to be investigated. However the paper needs major revisions.

**Abstract:**

In the background the authors stated that the aim of the paper is to examine unexpected recruitment challenges experienced in a complex clinical trial, but they do not explain the method in the methods section, rather they present the strategies chosen to overcome these barriers. Methods and results are not clearly separated and it is not so easy to understand the core of the study. The abstract should be reorganized.

**Background**

In the background the authors reported a summary of the studies addressing the issue of recruitment barriers, however no one is focused on schizophrenia. (See for example: Ghio L et al. Schizophrenia Trial Participation: Perceived Inclusion barriers and beliefs about Antipsychotics. Pharmacopsychiatry 2011; 44: 123–128)

At the end of the section the authors stated that the aim of the study is to examine and discuss the unexpected recruitment challenges experienced in a complex clinical trial. They should at least mention the focus of the clinical trial.

**Methods:**

In the methods section the authors describes the method of RCT, but there is no description of the methods with which they investigated the recruitment barriers. Is the RCT protocol published elsewhere? If yes, the part of method describing RCT can be greatly reduced in favour of a more detailed explanation of method of the present study.

The authors should briefly describe what the intervention Guided
Results

Organizational challenges and barriers

Of course the political reorganization accounted for a considerable change in the number of expected eligible participants for the trial. However this reason is more a problem of the design (including service that are not still operating) than a recruitment barrier.

More important is “the fact that the teams´ main focus was the establishment of the AOT and not research”. However this sentence seems an opinion a not a result based on a specific investigation.

Recruiting professionals - challenges and barriers

Also in this section the results seems to be based on authors opinion (…even though it appeared that they had not spoken to the eligible participant.. communicated a kind of “silent resistance”) rather than on structutal investigation.

Eligible participants - challenges and barriers

Discussion

The main finding is that the provision of encourage to the MHCPs had a great impact on the recruitment. However visits and email are commonly used strategies used in trials.

In conclusion, despite the issue investigated is of great interest the main limit of this paper is the lack of a clear methods that supports the results, which seems to be based on authors opinion rather than on evidence.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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