Reviewer's report

Title: The rise of assertive community interventions in South Africa: A randomized control trial assessing the impact of a modified assertive intervention on readmission rates; a three year follow-up

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Reviewer: Hans Kroon

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The paper clearly describes a 36 months controlled trial of a modified assertive community intervention (DACTS-fidelity to the assertive community treatment model is 3.1 out of 5) in a region with limited resources. Hospitalization outcomes of 56 patients were analyzed. The authors performed a per-protocol analysis: four patients that were randomised, but immediately transferred to long-term care were excluded; two patients were allocated to the intervention group after transfer from standard care.

This study expands our knowledge of the effectiveness of assertive community interventions for severely mentally ill in underresourced settings. Previous comments were adequately addressed. The authors can consider some minor suggestions. These are presented below.

1) (Methods section). The paper states that admission data were easily accessible in the provincial data system. Only when no readmissions were documented, patients, families or/and professionals were contacted to obtain information. The authors do not describe whether this resulted in extra admission data. If yes, the same procedure would be needed for all other patients (discretionary revision).

2) (Results section) I do not comprehend the following sentence: "Of note was that though the number of admissions was [the] similar in both groups, the intervention group had two patients with more than one admission to the facility, whereas all patients admitted from the intervention group had single admissions to the facility." It appears that one "intervention group" is a typo (discretionary revision).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests