Reviewer's report

Title: Improving communication and practical skills in working with inpatients who self-harm: A pre-test/post-test study of the effects of a training programme.

Version: 3  
Date: 2 December 2013

Reviewer: Jo Robinson

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. I think the manuscript would benefit from some minor restructuring. For example, the introduction section should end with the aims of the study and then the section on the training program I think would be better in the methods section under a sub-heading 'the intervention'.

2. The sub-heading Variables should really read 'Outcomes of interest'.

3. Related to this is the fact that in the section currently headed 'variables' there are 1 or 2 sentences that are not methods and really belong back in the introduction section. I suggest the authors re-read this section and pull those sentences out.

These changes would make it easier for the reader to follow the paper.

4. In the limitations section I think the authors should make reference to the lack of follow-up data and the fact that self-report data at post-test doesn't actually measure change in actual behaviour or practice, just attitudes. This is a shortfall of much gatekeeper training research and the authors may want to suggest that it could be a focus of future research.

Discretionary Revisions:

5. I think the addition of some discussion of the broader context of how this intervention sits within a suicide prevention framework may be of interest. For example some discussion of the literature around gatekeeper training more generally and how their findings compare to those of other studies.

A final comment:

6. I am not sure that the discussion of the art objects really adds to the paper - was some formal evaluation of this conducted?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.