Reviewer's report

Title: Post-traumatic stress disorder following patient assaults among staff members of mental health hospitals: a prospective study

Version: 1 Date: 9 February 2006

Reviewer: Roger Almvik

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper investigate a highly under researched field and should be of interest for the journal readers.

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Major Compulsory Revisions: Although a description of the population who declined to participate was not possible due to (local) ethical restrictions, this question/problem should be discussed further in the article. This could be solved by e.g. present and discuss the prevalence etc of such in other studies both in normal population and in similar populations as this study focus on. I highly recommend the PTSD IN CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEES IN SASKATCHEWAN by Stadnyk (2003) which I also think should be referred to in this article. Declining to participate is also quite interesting in this setting since avoidant behaviour actually is a PTSD symptom itself (as pointed out by the authors, but not actually discussed) and in fact one of the core symptoms of PTSD.

On page 5, 2nd section, the authors present results re the decline in PTSD in the follow-ups (after 2 and 6 months respectively). This is quite normal according to the litterature and should be discussed and mentioned here as well.

Finally; I miss some comments on directions or suggestions for further research.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct): When reffering to figures, percentages should be in brackets consequently through the whole article.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore): The article is a bit brief.

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What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests