Reviewer's report

Title: Factors associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression amongst internally displaced persons in Northern Uganda

Version: 1 Date: 8 March 2008

Reviewer: Jed Boardman

Reviewer's report:

COMMENTS FOR AUTHORS

Paper for Biomed Central

Roberts et al

Title: Factors associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression amongst internally displaced persons in Northern Uganda

This paper reports on a survey of the rates of probable PTSD and depression in people in displaced persons camps in two districts in Northern Uganda.

The study uses recognised sampling methods and acceptable instruments for measuring probable depression and PTSD. Its striking findings are the high rates of trauma and disorder among the population in the camps.

The study adds significantly to the literature in this field and particularly to the literature on the effects of continuing strife on the population in Northern Uganda, of which there is little.

I have two points that the authors may wish to take into consideration:

1. In the final paragraph on page 8 the authors quote the study by Ovuga et al (2005) and correctly state that the rates for depression in two districts was 17% - but what may be relevant to the present study is that the Ovuga et al survey found that there were significant differences in the rates of depression in the two districts surveyed – i.e. 26.3% in Adjumani and 6% in Bugiri – this is relevant to the present study as Adjumani is a neighbouring district to Gulu and, whilst not suffering the extent of the trauma that has befallen Gulu, it has suffered from the continuing war – Bugiri is in the east of Uganda, is a more stable area and has not been affected by the continuing troubles of the north of Uganda. It may be worth comparing the Adjumani figures with Gulu/Amuru figures and contrasting them with Bugiri.

2. In the conclusions on page 10 – it may be worth reflecting on the fact that the prevalence figures obtained for Gulu/Amuru give an estimate of need for treatment/intervention for PTSD and Depression. The high prevalence rates make direct treatment intervention on the scale required impossible (or at least very difficult) and the authors may wish to comment on this and possibly consider
means of intervention. The finding that a significant proportion of the trauma takes place in the camps does suggest some scope for prevention and the authors may wish to comment this.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests