Reviewer's report

Title: A real-life observational study of the effectiveness of FACT in a Dutch mental health region

Version: 1 Date: 27 May 2008

Reviewer: J.Remmers van Veldhuizen

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory revisions:

The FACT model needs some more explanation in the context of Dutch Mental health care. In this article is becomes not clear how FACT works with two approaches from one multidisciplinary recovery-oriented team:

a) individual casemanagement and home visits from a multidisciplinary team for SMI who are rather stable.

b) shared caseload with full ACT approach (with patients on the digital FACT-board and daily staff meetings and handovers to coordinate the intensive ACT treatment and care).

These approaches/methods are integrated in one team, working in a system with close cooperation with hospital and daycentre facilities.


The model started in 2004 and at this time more than 60 FACT teams in the Netherlands have been started (versus 25 ACT teams) on a population of 16.000.000. An increase to 200 FACT teams is expected.

Minor essential revisions:

In the discussion and conclusions they could consider some hypotheses regarding mediating mechanisms to explain their findings. In the Dutch discussion we are focusing on some possible effective aspects of FACT:

1) FACT (with intensive ACT and stepped down treatment in the samen team)arranges more continuity of care in comparison with a system with ACT teams and so called stepped down teams. Early signs of relapses can be treated, support can be given in episodes of life events etc.

2) FACT pays more than in the past attention to the EBM treatment of the 80% group(relatively stable SMI)with the different EBP by psychiatrist, psychologist, addiction workers and IPS, working as team members in the multidisciplinary
3) FACT focuses on 100% of the SMI in a specific region 45-55,000 inhabitants and includes the traditional ACT-patients and the other 80% of SMI as well. This gives more incentives for working with the community towards social inclusion.

Other Minor essential:

The authors have cited at two places "De Vugt" and colleagues; I suppose that they mean "Vugt" and colleagues. Page 14; Formally The FACT Fidelity Scale (FACTs) is under development by Bähler, van Veldhuizen, Vugt and others.

Discretionary Revisions

The authors could give more recent information regarding the development of implementation of FACT teams in the Netherlands and regarding certification. This work is being done by the centre for certification ACT and FACT in the Netherlands. They can mention the website: www.ccaf.nl

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

Above I have mentioned my role as as the ‘founder’of the FACT model in the Netherlands. This could be seen as a competing interest. I leave this decision to the editor.