Reviewer's report

Title: Interpersonal traumatization: What keeps survivors from seeking psychosocial help? A qualitative analysis

Version: 1 Date: 11 February 2010

Reviewer: Amy S House

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? See comments below.
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? See comments below.
3. Are the data sound? Yes
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? I’m not sure, given the methods are less familiar to me.
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes.
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable? See comments below.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
None.

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. The writing is problematic. There are several places throughout the manuscript where the meaning is unclear. This seems to be an issue of word choice and/or use of language in unfamiliar ways. I would recommend a thorough editing for accuracy and fluency for English speaking readers. Here are some of the problem areas:
   • P. 8, line 2, What is meant by “lack of places in therapy”?
   • P. 8, line 3, What is meant by “formalities or restricted indication”?
   • P. 8, line 4, What is meant by “lack of offers for specific problems”?
   • P. 8, 2nd to last line, What is meant by “retrenchment of autonomy”?
   • P. 9, line 18, the sentence that begins “Therein the social attitude fuels the fear…” is difficult to understand. It needs to be reworded for clarity.
   • P. 10, line 2, “too much determined by others” – meaning unclear
   • There are places throughout the manuscript where the word “touch” is used when I think what is meant is “contact.”
Discretionary Revisions:

1. I am only somewhat familiar with qualitative methods, and I am probably not alone in this among the journal readership. This methods section was difficult for me to understand. It would be helpful for the authors to assume the audience has basic but limited knowledge of qualitative methods and to spell it out for us in plain language, so that we can be confident that we know what you did. For example, on p. 6, the last sentence of the first paragraph: I don’t understand what that sentence means.

2. There are some questions proposed at the bottom of page 3 that appear to be the purpose of the article, and these could benefit from increased clarity and definition. I would also like to see the authors address these questions directly in their discussion of the results (eg., the importance of guilt and shame in the model?).

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.