Reviewer's report

Title: Newspaper Coverage of Mental Illness in the UK, 1992-2008

Version: 1 Date: 6 May 2011

Reviewer: Karen Nieuwenhuijsen

Reviewer's report:

Discretionary revisions

Minor essential revisions
- Background: please add to the statement on the past 20 years that it relates to
  the UK.
- Please describe Bonferroni adjustment under data analysis
- Page 5, end of first paragraph under coding: pleased describe whether one or
  two researchers were involved in deriving of thematic categories.
- Table 1, : please present clearly how explaining and exploring mental illness
  are both subcategories of “good news”

Major compulsory revisions
- Overall, the information in the paper is interesting. However, the organization
  and structure of the paper needs improving. It appears that not all the
  aims/hypotheses of the study are described in the background. In the methods
  section, the it is not clearly stated how each of the hypotheses will be tested. As
  a result, the results section includes paragraphs that appear to have interesting
  content. However, the reader does not know why that result is being presented.
  Also, in the methods section the reader cannot follow how the coding system
  would lead to the testing of the hypotheses. In the discussion on page 15 (last
  paragraph before the conclusion) the aim to “give a broad overview of how
  diagnoses are covered “ is firstly described. I suggest that the authors more
  clearly state(all of) their objective and organize the results section according to
  these objective.
- Please elaborate on stigma in the background, what is defined as
  stigma-provoking content of papers? Although stigma is mentioned in the
  background, a thorough description is lacking which makes it hard for the reader
  to understand the codes in Appendix I. Also, the paragraph on page 13
  (discussion) on how a biological model of mental disorders can provoke stigma is
  hard to follow.
- Background: please be clear about the three time points and period or move it
  to the methods section
- Please describe the design of the study, including time points in the methods
  section.
- Please explain why a truncation was not used for mental disorder. Wouldn’t the
papers have also used the plural?
- Please explain more clearly how the input of Corrigan and Wahl lead to the codes that were used. I cannot see how they are related.
- please explain what the authors mean by “the much smaller changes in the elements of reporting give some qualification to this meaning”
- Discussion, page 11, last paragraph: pattern in all four publications: please explain.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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'