Reviewer's report

**Title:** Performance Indicators for Public Mental Healthcare: A Systematic International Inventory

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 8 November 2011

**Reviewer:** Harold Pincus

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Reviewers report (by Harold A. Pincus, MD and Brigitta Spaeth-Rublee, MA)

The authors are to be congratulated on an important and thorough, well researched paper. The topic is relevant both from a public health and quality improvement/ assurance perspective.

The methodological approach and presentation of the results is quite impressive and the the organization and structure of the tables provide a vast amount of well presented information.

The focus on performance indicators in the context of public mental health care is an interesting focus of research and analysis.

**Major compulsory revisions**

1. However, it is important to emphasize that public mental health systems are quite different across countries and the paper should explain this in more detail. In other words, the authors should more clearly specify what is meant by "public mental health care" and what was excluded from their purview and how they implemented the focus across reports from different countries.

2. The "weak" point of the paper is the overall narrative of the paper. With a total number of 51 pages, the current paper shows itself to be more of a compilation of information rather than a polished manuscript that engages readers.

In many instances the results and discussion section of the present paper become too detailed and make it unclear what the major points are that the authors want to bring across.

Therefore, the authors may want to consider condensing the results section

• by cutting non-essential information from the text which does not necessarily add value to the paper (e.g., Results, Publications on PMHC quality measurement, United States, paragraph 8: " By the end of the year 2000, numerous performance measures for diverse levels of assessment, dimensions of care, quality domains, treatment-settings, diseases, and conditions had been proposed and developed for the U.S. (public) mental health care services and systems. In recognition of the need for a national dialog, a shared vision in the field of mental health and substance abuse services, and an agreement on a core set of indicators and measures, [...] and
• by limiting themselves to describing the results as presented in the tables without providing any further interpretation/discussion of the results (e.g., Results, Characteristics of PMHC performance indicators, paragraph 4: "Accessibility reflects the ease with which health services are reached by consumers, and PI of equity aim to measure the extend to which a system deals fairly with all concerned. The finding that a relatively large number of PI assess this dimension of performance may be directly related to ‘safety-net’ functions of PMHC and […]

Equally, for the discussion section the authors should focus on some clearly defined messages which they want to focus on and share with the reader.

We think that the authors can turn this into an exciting paper and recommend this paper for publication after revising as suggested above and identifying some key messages.

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

**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