Reviewer's report

Title: Mass social contact interventions and their effect on mental health related discrimination

Version: 1 Date: 14 March 2012

Reviewer: P corrigan

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this stimulating paper where the authors try to document an important topic: impact of an innovative program meant to change the stigma of mental illness. Truly innovative is the strategy to "normalize" disclosure in spontaneous interactions between people with mental illness and the public. The investigators make a valiant effort to evaluate the program’s impact, in the process illustrating the difficulties of conducting sound research like this in more global and less controlled situations. They use some solid measures of stigma change and have some interesting findings. I offer the following comments for their consideration.

1. Generally, I would encourage reorganizing the Intro; it meanders a tad from the impact of contact (factors that mediate contact), the necessity to disclose, and ways in which contact is hampered because people choose. Perhaps most interesting in the Intro, and not well-developed, is the innovative idea of "normalizing" disclosure. I think, as hinted on page (oops; MS was not paginated) 2 of the Intro, it is a supportive atmosphere for self-disclosure. What makes it “supportive?”

2. I found the description of TTC, Time to Get Moving (TGM), and Rainbow at the end of the Intro and in the Methods a bit hard to follow. The first sentence in the Methods is redundant with comments in the Intro. The text states volunteers came together at each event. Who are the volunteers? What events? How was TGM integrated with physical activity events?

3. A bit of work is needed to carefully lay out who the participants are in the study: seems to me you are distinguishing between disclosers and those disclosed too. Some kind of pithy way is needed to distinguish these groups. In the same section, you refer abruptly to questionnaires: what are these questionnaires?

4. You then describe the items/scales that comprise the questionnaire a page or two later. The reader needs to be a bit oriented about the significance/meaning of the constructs that comprise the scales. What does intended stigmatizing behavior mean? A page later: seems a bit redundant by reintroducing the RIBS.

5. I personally think the section on Analysis strategies would work better directly woven into the Results; i.e., describe specific stats as used.

6. I think more attention to detail is needed. Table 1 is never mentioned in the text. At one point you say “predictors which predicted…” Awkward.
7. Please remind readers what “facilitating social contacts” are in Table 3. I don’t understand what “subsequent behavioral actions” are in Table 4.

8. I did not see analyses that compared the effects of TGM and Rainbow which surprised me.

9. Hedge the Discussion a tad; I might say, “TTC events MAY HAVE facilitated intergroup contact between people with and without mental health problems…”

10. I think there are two significant limitations to the study that need to be added to the Discussion:
   a. The very, very small percent of people who participated in the study at the events and even smaller group that followed up;
   b. Which may have underpowered some analyses.

This is an exemplary paper showing the effects of real world efforts to change public stigma. The authors are to be commended. I recommend to accept after minor essential revisions.

**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:**

none