Reviewer’s report

Title: A school intervention for mental health literacy in adolescents: Effects of a non-randomized cluster controlled trial

Version: 1 Date: 6 June 2013

Reviewer: Stan P Kutcher

Reviewer’s report:

This is a nicely written paper on an important subject. I think it merits publication but there are a few issues that I suggest the authors need to address prior to publication:

1 - Jorm’s operational definition of mental health literacy (the depression vignette) has to my knowledge never been validated. The authors need to acknowledge this. They also should acknowledge that the vignette approach in general has not been validated.

2 - the authors need to let us know why they chose the vignettes that they did. Why AN? Why not ADHD which is so much more common and overall much more of a public health problem and much more applicable to the school setting.

3 - the authors provide no data on the knowledge or attitudes of teachers. There is recent work on this. They should find and cite that work and address this issue. They also do not provide us with any data on how their sessions with the teachers modified or did not modify the knowledge and attitudes of the teachers. Surely this is also very important. They need to address this.

5 - there is insufficient followup data - could the positive effects decay with time - the authors need to address this issue

6 - they did not study help seeking behaviour - yet this is what one might expect would be an important outcome for a mental health literacy intervention - this is not a problem not to study it, but they need to acknowledge more about this oversight and identify this as an important issue for future work

7 - a recent meta-analysis found no positive impacts of school mental health literacy programs - the authors may benefit from finding this article and addressing the issues it raises

Thank you for the chance to review this nice piece of work

Professor Stan Kutcher