Reviewer's report

Title: Exploring the characteristics linked to the reduction of stigma associated with schizophrenia following an educational program among parents of adolescents

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Reviewer: Erica Peluso

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript covers an important topic: anti-stigma interventions with parents of high school students in relation to schizophrenia. The authors evaluated the effect of a web-based educational program in a population sample of parents across Japan and brought interesting results.

The manuscript is generally well written, the question posed is well defined and methods used are appropriate.

There are a few issues that I suggest the authors need to address prior to publication:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Participants:

1. A great number of parents of high school students selected (2,310 out of 5,000) did not take part in the study and their characteristics were not presented. It is necessary to address this topic since there may have been important differences in the characteristics and attitudes of respondents and non-respondents.

Measures of schizophrenia and stigma:

2. Line 1 - Link's Devaluation-Discrimination Scale reference is not presented. The authors should present more information (type of questions, psychometric properties, etc) about this scale used as the measure of stigma level.

Statistical analysis:

3. Line 10 - It is not clear why the authors chose to consider a change (increase or decrease) in three points or more to define stigma-increased and decreased groups.

Results:

4. Before presenting the results for the two groups (stigma increased and stigma decreased), it would be better to present the effect of the web intervention in the whole sample.

5. Line 10- How the average scores of pre- and post-program Link's scale were calculated and divided into four categories? The authors could clarify this part of the text.
Discussion: the authors should address some other aspects in this section

6. Why the majority of parents did not have (or had slight) change in stigma levels after the web intervention?

7. The authors could discuss in more depth the results of Link’s scale and social distance scale in the whole sample in the pre-program evaluation before discussing factors associated with stigma-increased/ decreased groups.

8. What can be suggested for future anti-stigma interventions designed for parents of high school students?

- Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract: the conclusion is too generic and does not reflect what has been found

Background: line 4 - I suggest to change the expression “remove the obstruction” to “contribute to remove this barrier”

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests