Reviewer’s report

Title: Use of mental health services among disaster survivors: predisposing factors

Version: Date: 27 March 2007

Reviewer: Hayden Bosworth

Reviewer’s report:

General

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

In general the authors were responsive to the initial reviews and the study provides important information. However, there remain some concerns/questions, in particular, the discussion. The discussion remains unorganized and could benefit from the use of paragraphs. In general, the first paragraph of the discussion spans two pages and contains a summary of results, a discussion of findings specific to ‘immigrant status’ and gender. At a minimum, this could be broken down into three paragraphs.

Instead of examining predisposing actors for mental health use at 0-18 months and 18-36 months post-disaster, it is unclear why the authors did not model the full time period from 0-36 months instead of breaking the time period into two arbitrary time periods. Mixed models could use all available data.

The use of the term ‘immigrant’ is misleading –using first or secondary generation or some variation would be more meaningful. Incidentally, it seems odd that second generation individuals would still be considered non Dutch natives.

The statement on the top of page 6 is somewhat misleading. Prior studies have examined electronic MHS records as an outcome of MHS utilization in combination with predisposing variables from both EMR and self-reports. (Using pub-med, I identified potentially 5 studies). However, what is not clear and what may make the current study unique is examining this issue in a sample of individuals who experienced a disaster. Even this I am not all that convinced is unique. The Veterans Health Administration is the largest health care provider in the US and a number of patients were directly affected two summers ago by Hurricane Katrina. Perhaps stating that few studies have data to address this issue.

On page 7 when discussing the mean duration of treatment, it would be helpful to also include what proportion of the population sought care.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

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.