Reviewer’s report

Title: Mental health of immigrants from the former Soviet Bloc: a future problem for primary health care in the enlarged European Union? A cross-sectional study.

Version: 1 Date: 7 June 2006

Reviewer: Yaakov Lerner

Reviewer’s report:

General
The study is based on the assumption that one can make a valid and reliable psychiatric diagnosis based on a self-reported description of a long standing psychiatric disease or disability. Self reported health may be a reliable indicator of general health as the authors have stated, but this may not be true for psychiatric diseases. In fact, the use of such a method may explain the lower prevalence of reported psychiatric diseases in the former Soviet Union. As the authors themselves cite from the literature: “That people from the FSU tend to be ashamed of their physical and psychological problem and tend not to share them with others (Skultons V., Social Science and Medicine 2003:56:2421-2431). The same tendency was reported also by Levav et al. (Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences 1990:27:131-144).”

In order to assess the validity of the data the diagnoses derived from the SALLS should be validated at least for a sub-sample in each of the different population groups, by a structured clinical instrument like the CIDI.

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

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)