Reviewer’s report

Title: Age differences in mental health literacy

Version: 2 Date: 1 December 2007

Reviewer: Perla Werner

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Age differences in mental health literacy

The aim of the present study was to assess age differences in mental health literacy. The recognition of two of the main mental health problems (depression and schizophrenia) as well as their causes, treatments and sources of help were examined in an epidemiological study of Australian adults ages 18 and over.

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

The topic of age differences in mental health literacy has received a notable limited consideration. This lack of attention was indeed discussed in a review article by Werner, P. (2005). Lay persons’ beliefs about mental health: where is age and where is Alzheimer’s disease? International Psychogeriatrics, 17(3):371 â## 382. I would suggest the authors to include this article in their references.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

Overall the methods are appropriate. I would suggest including additional information regarding:

a. Response rate
b. The rating scales used to assess beliefs about treatments and causal beliefs.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

Yes.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Yes

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable?
Overall, the writing of the manuscript is clear and adequate. The following clarifications are required:

a. Please add a reference to the sentence about the advantages of early help seeking in the Background section (Page 3, lines 5 â## 7 from top).
b. Please add information about the attitudes elicited (Page 5, line 13 from top).
c. Page 5, line 6 from bottom â## it should read "responses" instead of "respondents".
d. Page 6, line 1 from top: it is not clear why was the coding "person must first recognize the problem" considered as a source of help?
e. Similarly, it is not clear why "treating professionals" was considered a belief about treatment and not a source of help? (Page 6, line 3 from top).

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests’