Reviewer's report

Title: Child Mental Health Differences Amongst Ethnic Groups In Britain: A Systematic Review

Version: 1 Date: 28 April 2008

Reviewer: Stephen A Stansfeld

Reviewer's report:

Comments for the attention of the authors
The authors are to be commended for carrying out this methodologically challenging but very timely review of studies of differences in rates of psychiatric disorders from different ethnic groups in UK children.

Minor essential revisions:

Page 4 – Search Strategy
What was the start date of your literature search?

Page 6 – Study types
Was there any justification for these minimum sample sizes for the different groups? Why more than 10 for prevalence studies and yet more than 20 for clinic based studies? – was this based on calculation of minimum sample sizes as set out at the top of page 7.

Page 7, line 6
How many titles were initially identified for screening by age here?

Page 12, line 14
Word missing ‘Difference white minority’

Page 17, line 5
‘Than’ not ‘that’

Discretionary Revisions

Page 7, para 3
I think it might be better to have more detail of the limitations in the text rather than just in Table 2. Did you use any standard criteria for judging limitations such as the Newcastle Ottawa Scale? Do you have any data on the level of agreement on data extraction and assessment of limitations by the two epidemiologists?

Page 15, line 3-up
This is an important point that White British children are not an invariant category. Not only may this group include migrants from Europe who may have
different rates of mental disorders but they may also have different profiles of social advantage and disadvantage depending on where the populations are drawn from—that may mean their use as a benchmark is a bit questionable across studies.

Page 16, para 2
One issue that you didn’t comment on that may be relevant, (although it may be there is insufficient data to say anything definitive), is that rates of disorder between ethnic groups may differ according to age. Also, probably beyond the scope of the review, some breakdown of rates of disorders between ethnic groups by gender would also have been interesting.

Page 18, last line
‘Greater unmet need’ could be unpacked a bit further. This could both represent that there are insufficient services for Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations and that they are not culturally appropriate or attractive. It could also possibly represent the fact that mental illness in children is less recognised and more stigmatised by families and the community in these cultural groups.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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