Reviewer’s report

Title: What causes treatment failure - the patient, primary care, secondary care or inadequate interaction in the health services?

Version: 2 Date: 20 December 2010

Reviewer: nadia abdulhadi

Reviewer’s response to the authors:

1- Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes the research question is well defined in the introduction part together with the aims of the study.

2- Are the methods appropriate and well described?
My responses to point 1 and 2 in the covering letter of the authors are: First of all thanks for clarification but I did not misunderstand that there was no qualitative analysis but you conducted qualitative part in this study. I did not agree with how the qualitative part been handled. This is because the authors mentioned and acknowledged that they used both qualitative and quantitative methods in their study, and mentioned that the interviews were transcribed and evaluated it means there was some qualitative analysis done. In addition they admitted that the way they combined both methods has pros and cons, as this is in not a usual way and a new method that not been used before. In addition, they discussed the limitations of this method and pointed that the questionnaire filled in by the doctors is the weakest methodological part of the paper and has not been formally validated.

I would like to say that that since the authors did a great effort and interviewed the patients and independently transcribed the interviews, why not to show some of the results of these interviews? Such as quotations at least if you do not wish to go into details of content analysis. This will strengthen the study and decrease the limitation and enhance the validity of the study that you are missing.

- No comments on point 3 and 4

-Point 5: the authors said: Information about educational level and occupation could perhaps have been of interest, but was omitted because it is impossible to
draw conclusions on the importance of educational level and occupation for treatment failure based on only 12 patients.

- My comment is that the authors included only 12 patients and this is not a problem in qualitative methods as the number of participants is not important as their characteristics and opinions, I do not agree that because they are only 12 patients so there is no importance for their demographic characteristics I asked for. The authors built all the study and results of treatment failure on these 12 patients. In addition, these 12 patients had responsibility also in the treatment failure that might be related to their education level, occupation, socio-economical background--- all these open doors for further discussions about possibility of these factors in the treatment failure. However, the authors can ignore this if they do not want to go into further details in the discussion.

- Thanks for adding point 6 about Norwegian health care system

3. Are the data sound?

Yes I agree that the data are sound but please look at my comments in number 2. But I do not agree with the sentence said by the authors in the covering letter that: (it is not correct to refer only to impressions in the results).

I would like to ask what impressions you mean, you are not refereeing to impressions because you mentioned that: In this study, the interviews were analyzed and scored by a group of independent doctors unaware of each others evaluations. You stated clearly that the interviews were analyzed, and then scored, how the interviews were analyzed?

It is true that now you added briefing about the questions asked during the interviews. The authors said: The interview was semi structured with an interview guide with open questions which focused on the patients’ wellbeing, their satisfaction and experience with treatment, contact with primary and secondary health care, and their opinion of reasons for the treatment failure.

My response is that the questions of the interviews look very good, opened, allow chance for patients’ expressons and highly important, and there were different opinions that deserve to be shown separately rather than to be interpreted by the doctors through the questionnaire that (answered by yes, no, do not know) and reflected the doctors own evaluation and interpretation more than the patients own perceptions. I am sorry I do not agree on ignoring what patients said, please reflect some of their answers in the manuscript and this is not difficult since the transcript of interviews are there. In addition, please show an Annex of the open ended questions rather than mentioning general idea about what have been asked.

By expanding the results section I just meant to enhance the validity of your good and important study especially that it has a qualitative part even if you handled it in a quantitative way.

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. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes

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

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes it is acceptable

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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