Reviewer's report

Title: Factors associated with use of community mental health services by schizophrenia patients using multilevel analysis

Version: 1 Date: 11 July 2011

Reviewer: Satu Viertiö

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:
There are no such serious mistakes in this paper.

Minor Essential Revisions:
The research question is well understandable. I think that it is well argued to study this subject. Persons with schizophrenia have sometimes difficulties staying in treatment because of the nature of their illness. The attendance to treatment also varies in different patients. It is important to study factors associated to it.

The dependent variable, the number of outpatient contacts, is well described. Also independent variables are well described, except the level of education. I hoped more information about how many years of education mean primary and secondary school in Spain, as these things vary in different countries.

The first paragraph on page 7 consists of two sentences. The second sentence should be connected to the first, now it is without a verb.

I hoped more information about the index Global Level of Severity, a reference of some kind, perhaps. How widely this index is in use, in clinical settings and in research?

There is quite much missing data, but researchers have used imputation method to compensate the missing data, which is good. As the author mentions in Limitations, data is from clinical records and therefore not as reliable as data from interviews.

The patient sample is not very ill, almost 90% has only some symptoms but moderate disability, half of the sample is doing quite well. I wonder what kind of results would be if the sample had more severe impairment in functioning, which is still quite common in persons with schizophrenia. That is why I think these results are not generalized to all patient groups. This should also be mentioned in Limitations.

This manuscript is in my opinion relevantly written.

Table 2: Because all information (number of participants and the percentages) are in Table 2, it is unnecessary to write the same figures also in the text (page
It would perhaps be good to write in Table 2 that “Outpatient contacts Mean (SD)” means contacts with community health services over a year, as is already mentioned in the text on page 6, but this should be clearly stated also in Table 2, because tables should be understood without reading the text.

In Table 3 it should also be mentioned that the figures are contacts during one year. And it is unnecessary to mention the same figures in the text.

In Table 4 there should be mentioned by which variables model is adjusted (age, gender…?). Figures of Table 4 are unnecessarily mentioned in the text, pages 11 and 12. Either in Table 4 or in the text (page 12, line 10) there’s a wrong figure (t=3.25 or t=3.21?). Statistical significances are marked in a different manner that I’m used to. I think that P<0.05 is * and P>0.1 is not significant any more, actually.

All tables are still unfinished and need corrections.

I can’t really follow the idea on page 15, lines 13-17. This should be opened more. What is another reason for the different number of contacts with the patients of psychiatrists?

Otherwise the discussion about “induced demand by the professional” is an interesting point and as the author says, the phenomenon should be studied with larger sample of professionals.

The limitations of the study are clearly stated. One more limitation could be mentioned, quite large amount of missing data, although it was imputed. And low severity of the symptoms in the sample.

I think this manuscript has many good points and after the revision of the tables and the text related to them as well as making the discussion more compact, it could be accepted. If I have understood correct there is going to be a follow-up and that gives additional information in future. Improvement of community services is important after psychiatric reforms as dehospitalization. It is important to know about the factors which affect the use of health care services in persons with psychotic disorder.

**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:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests' below.