Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors affecting the hospital stay in psychiatric patients: the role of comorbidity requiring referral.

Version: 3 Date: 3 February 2012

Reviewer: Sonia Johnson

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. The style of the paper is currently rather verbose: the question, findings and message are quite simple and could readily be presented in a paper no more than two thirds this length.

2. I don't think a combined analysis for the two diagnostic groups adds anything where they have already been presented separately and found to show different patterns of associations with explanatory variables. The detailed discussion of which conditions are associated with each illness is also of rather limited usefulness given the small numbers.

3. I am not convinced that this the most appropriate analysis but would recommend that a statistician review the paper from this perspective: the analysis appears to treat number of referrals as a series of categorical variables (one or zero, two or zero etc.) - would it not be better to do an analysis better corresponding to the nature of the variable e.g. multinomial regression?

4. The Greek service context seems an unusual one (at least from the perspective of the UK) in that there is little reference to primary care: some of the conditions resulting in specialist referral are ones that I would normally expect to be managed in primary care. This deserves some comment.

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.