Reviewer's report

Title: Introducing Peer Worker roles into UK mental health service teams: a qualitative analysis of the organisational benefits and challenges

Version: 1 Date: 24 September 2012

Reviewer: Sandra Moll

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Presentation of descriptive data in the paper is not sufficient to advance knowledge in the field. Qualitative data analysis needs to be theoretically informed, with more critical reflection and analysis of key concepts (eg. Identity shifts; role tensions, boundary barriers). Since the data was collected across three different sites, there is an opportunity to compare/contrast the impact of the organizational context; also to compare the standpoints of peer workers, service users and staff members. The current paper, however, represents only superficial coding categories and requires a more sophisticated analysis to develop meaningful themes. Grounded theory methods, for example, could provide a systematic approach to analysis, and contribute to a theoretically informed, contextually relevant understanding of the tensions shaping the role of peer workers.

2. Although there are many interesting quotes, there is not enough explanation of the points or a clear analytic framework to guide the reader. Need fewer quotes and more information to develop your argument.

3. The table of “themes” was confusing -the progression of analysis was not clear and appears to be different ways of categorizing data rather than “themes”.

4. Need to demonstrate a greater understanding of qualitative methods. For example, what is the standpoint of the researchers and what strategies did you use to build methodological rigour?

5. Conclusions regarding the problems of recruiting peer workers from within an organization, and of creating “authentic” peer roles did not seem to flow from the presentation of data or discussion.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. “Sample” description should be moved earlier -after description of participants in overall study. Clarify how the 41 “participants” were selected from the 121 (plus 30?) in the overall project. What were the inclusion/exclusion criteria? For example, if a participant simply mentioned a peer worker in passing, would 1 or 2 comments be sufficient for inclusion & analysis?

2. Descriptions of the role of peer workers in the three different programs were helpful. Need to also include details about the number of staff, peer workers and service recipients in each program. Were the respondents representative of the
stakeholders in each program?

3. In describing approach to data analysis, it is not acceptable to say that you used “tools routinely used in inductive enquiry,” or that coding occurred because the author “thought it was meaningful.” Explanation needs to be linked to established qualitative methods.

4. Although the purpose of the paper was outlined, the research questions guiding the study, were not defined. Clarify the research questions for the overall study, and for the secondary analysis.

5. Abstract need to include research questions, and more detail re: methods (eg. number of participants, process of data collection and analysis)

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests