Reviewer's report

Title: Feasibility, reliability and validity of a questionnaire on health care consumption and productivity loss in patients with a psychiatric disorder (TiC-P)

Version: 1 Date: 3 April 2013

Reviewer: Hildegard Seidl

Reviewer's report:

The objective of this paper was to assess the feasibility, reliability and construct validity of a commonly applied questionnaire on healthcare utilization and productivity losses in patients with a psychiatric disorder (TiC-P). This paper constitutes an interesting contribution to the existing literature on the use of self-report questionnaires on health care utilization. The limitations of the work are clearly stated.

Major compulsory Revisions

1. The main objective of this paper was to assess the validity of the TiC-P, but the applied validation only examined contacts with psychotherapists (one out of 14 questions) and long-term absence from work as part of the SF-HLQ. This needs to be clearly conveyed in the title, abstract (aims, methods and results), results, discussion and conclusions. The assumption that the validity of self-reported contacts with psychotherapists is comparable to the validity of items on other healthcare utilization is highly speculative and no evidence to demonstrate this could be provided. Therefore, this sentence has to be removed.

2. Construct validity was assessed by comparing the patient reported contacts with psychotherapists from the Monitoring Study with registered data. It is not clear why only data of 114 responders were analyzed, given that the Monitoring study included 631 participants and the reported number of contacts ranged from 0 to 8. Table 5 is missing.

3. To assess feasibility, it was checked whether the items of the questionnaire were filled in completely. For medication intake, however, it is not clearly stated how large the random sample was and how the authors could detect whether a medication name was missing.

4. Discussion, paragraph 6, last sentence: “It is not expected that this may have major impact on the validity…”

The recall period is three times shorter than usual. This limitation should be discussed in more detail.

Minor Essential Revisions

5. Methods, paragraph 5: “Additionally, depending on the relevance for the target population the questionnaire allows adding or leaving out specific items of
resource utilisation.”

Why does the questionnaire allow adding or leaving out specific items?

6. Study design and analyses

How often was the TiC-P filled out in the Monitory Study? (How many follow-ups were there?)

7. Table 1: The diagnoses of only 76% of the participants are reported.

8. To assess reliability, a test-retest design was applied. How did the authors ensure that the questions on health care utilization at both measurements (test and retest) cover the same period?

9. Discussion, paragraph 7: Please justify the statement: „It is plausible that the questionnaire is valid in other groups of patients.”

Discretionary Revisions

10. Discussion, paragraph 7: “Agreement between the number of days of absence from work… and self-report of the patient was satisfactory” It should be mentioned that this agreement only is the result of accepting a margin of +/- 7 days.

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.