Reviewer's report

Title: Exploring the impact of common assessment instrumentation on communication and collaboration in inpatient and community-based mental health settings: a focus group study

Version: 3 Date: 25 June 2014

Reviewer: Maggie Gibson

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Discretionary Revisions:

1. The study would be enhanced by a brief description of usual practices pre-intervention in the community setting, so that the reader has a sense of how much novelty was introduced by the common assessment instrument. This information should be used to inform the discussion about whether common instrumentation is a necessary but not sufficient condition for improving communication.

2. The limitations of the study design, in particular, that the study included only one focus group from each setting, in one city, with limited disciplinary representation, should be mentioned.

3. The focus group participants in both settings agreed that information uptake – as opposed to availability – was a major barrier to more integrated communication. It is proposed that a mechanism whereby the raw assessment data is transformed into user-friendly clinical summaries might bridge the gap. It should be noted that this too is an assumption, and needs to be tested for veracity. It is possible that provision of this enhanced resource might also be found to be necessary but not sufficient to actually enhance communication during transitions. Reference to the emerging literature on inter-professional practice is relevant to this point and would broaden the contribution of the paper to the mental health field.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests.