Reviewer's report

Title: Healthcare in schizophrenia: effectiveness and progress of a redesigned care network

Version: 1 Date: 5 July 2007

Reviewer: Francesco Amaddeo

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper afford the relevant topic to compare the cost-effectiveness of a network of psychiatric services compared with a traditional system of services not well integrated. The importance to provide system of services that allow to assure the continuity of care to the patients is very well recognized in the literature. Efficacy, effectiveness and patient's satisfaction of these types of organization have been showed in several studies. The study aims are well described and the methodology seems adequate to answer the authors’ questions.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Major Compulsory Revision
The following information are needed in the Methods section:

1) It is unclear how the traditional system is organized and if this traditional organization was only limited to hospital-based facilities; I suggest that the authors explain it in more details.

2) It is also unclear who is the key-manager in the integrated treatment model. Is he/she a professional (which type?) or is a team?

3) Patients were randomly selected from two groups that were previously defined. More details are needed on how patients were assigned to the two groups (1210 vs. 18,911).

In the Discussion section (page 11), the comparison of costs between countries should be cautious as costs should be adjusted in some way (for example, using Purchasing Power Parity or similar indexes).

Moreover, the discussion should indicate as a limitation the particular study design. In fact, the patients were not randomly assigned to the two study groups, they were randomly selected from to groups previously defined in a way that needs to be clarified.
Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

I would suggest to change the term “America” with “USA”, as America is a continent and the Authors actually refer to the Country “United States of America”.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**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 that I have no competing interests