Author's response to reviews

Title: Public stigma against family members of people with mental illness: Findings from the Gilgel Gibe Field Research Center (GGFRC), Southwest Ethiopia

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Response to reviewers’ comments

Title: Public stigma against family members of people with mental illness: Findings from the Gilgel Gibe Field Research Center (GGFRC), Southwest Ethiopia

Reviewer: Hatsumi Yoshii

Comment: Dear authors,
The subject matter "Public stigma against family members of people with mental illness" is very interesting and it's a significant work of research. Below I'll make some comments about your paper for you to consider.

Response: dear reviewer, thank you so much for your time and comments

Background:
Comment: You should write down the unabridged form of "PSFMPWMI" here.
Response: we wrote now the unabridged form.

Methods:
Comment: Have you chosen stratified random sampling with locality as a stratified factor, taking population distribution of each stratum into consideration? If so, you should also have included sex as a factor.
Response: we only stratified based on locality but sex was just simply used as one of the independent variables.

Comment: What are "trained interviewer administered questionnaires"? Please explain in detail.
Response: thank you. We modified now as follow “……conducted using questionnaires by trained interviewers”

Comment: Please specify the "trained and experienced personnel."
Response: Trained and experienced personnel who were working in the GGFRC supervised the data collection. the details of the sampling and the data collection process can be also obtained on our pervious publication (reference 28)

Comment: When creating your questions in the questionnaires, have you translated backward and confirmed that the questions are identical with the original ones? Or if there is/are prior study/studies conducted in the mother tongue and published in a journal/journals, you should cite the paper(s) in the references.
Response: yes, backward translation of the questionnaire was made and assured to the original meaning. But we could not find previously used tool in the mother tongue.

Comment: Reliability coefficient alpha is deemed trustworthy when it is 0.75 to 0.80 and more. 0.70 is lower than that.

Response: yes, the reliability is lower and future researches should to get better measure of family stigma. And we stated this limitation at the end of the discussion section.

Results:

Comment: What do the figures in the t-test (ANOVA) in the Table 3 signify?

Response: it is stigma mean score differences among the different background characteristics. We stated it now in the title of table 3.

Discussion:

Comment: You report high stigma among rural residents. You should discuss this by citing other papers.

Response: Thank you. You are right and would have been nice. But we could not find literature in the same study topic to compare with.
Reviewer: Roger Gibson

Major Compulsory Revisions

Comment1: It would be useful to identify which explanations and signs of mental illness need to be modified and clarified respectively (both in the abstract and main document).
Response: the analysis showed that high explanation or any high perceived sign was correlated with decreased stigma. We made change (replaced the word ‘modify’ by ‘inform’) to the statement to avoid such ambiguity.

Comment2: Details about the Gilgel Gibe Field Research Centre needed to be provided in the Methods section of the manuscript: who lives there? When did it become a research centre? What kind of research has been conducted there in the past?
Response: thank you we included more information about the research center now.

Comment3: In the Conclusion section of the Abstract, the final sentence is not supported by the findings of the study. It should be deleted.
Response: Thank you. We deleted it now.

Comment4: There are a number of grammatical problems throughout the document. These should be corrected. Here are only a few of several examples:

a) In the first sentence of the third paragraph on page 3, "towards the family members" would be preferable to "to the family members"

b) In the penultimate line of the same paragraph, "which" should be "who"

c) In the second sentence of the Methods section, "54,538 population were living" should be "54,538 persons were living."

Response: thank you. Now we made general editorial and grammatical corrections.

Comment5: The background should explore in greater detail the concepts of perceived signs and explanations of mental illness. It should be made clear why it is important to explore them in this study. The expected findings should be included in the hypotheses (see item 6).
Response: Paragraphs two and three of the background section presented about the influence of explanations of mental illness to stigma.

Comment6: Hypotheses should be included at the end of the Background section.
Justifications for these hypotheses should be provided in the preceding text. The rest of the paper should be centered around these hypotheses: How were they tested (Methods)? Were they supported by the findings (Results)? What are their implications (Discussion)?
Response: the final statements in the background section are hypothesis of the study. They are in a statement form. The first one of what is the prevalence of family stigma in the
public? The second is what are the correlates of family members’ stigma in GGFRC? And the remaining methods and discussions focus on these two hypotheses.

Comment 7: A detailed description of the simple random sampling technique used (paragraph 1 of Methods section on page 4) is required.

Response: the sampling detail is presented with another publication from the same study reference 28 and this is cited to avoid self-plagiarism.

Comment 8: A description of the extent to which semantic equivalence was attained with the process of translation and back translation (as described in paragraph 1 on page 5) should be provided.

Response: thank you, now we put the following statement “Translation and back-translation was done to ensure semantic equivalence.”

Comment 9: A description of what the logarithmic transformation (paragraph 2 on page 5) achieved, i.e. how did it make the data more amenable to analysis, should be included.

Response: Now we included the following statement. “After the transformation, the distribution of stigma score was normal.”

Comment 10: The Methods section should provide more details on the specific perceived explanations and signs of mental illness that were explored.

Response: we provided now examples of the items and how they were measured. “The psychographic characteristics included (a) 3 items measuring perceived supernatural, (b) 6 items measuring non-supernatural (biological and psychosocial) explanations of mental illness (example: stress, evil spirit, drug addiction etc), (c) 8 items measuring exposure to people with mental illness (PWMI) (example: message from TV/radio, ever worked or lived with people with mental illness, etc) and (d) 12 items measuring perceived signs (example: suicide attempt, self neglect and sleep disturbance etc) of mental illness, and were measured as yes = 1 and no= 0 scores.”

Comment 11: The Methods section should provided details on how perceived explanations and signs of mental illness were measured, e.g. what constituted higher perceived supernatural, biological and psychosocial explanations (as described in lines 4-5 of paragraph 2 on page 7)?

Response: we provided now more explanations. “After summing up scores on the respective psychographic characteristic, higher values indicated higher perceived supernatural, psychosocial and biological explanations, perceived signs, and exposure to PWMI.”

Comment 12: Were biological and psychosocial explanations considered separately? If not, why not?
Response: They were not considered separately since we classified them as supernatural and non-supernatural (biological and psychosocial) explanations. All the biological and psychosocial explanations items measured non-supernatural explanations of mental illness.

Comment13: Table 2 should include a column outlining the possible range of scores for each item. It should also contain footnotes outlining the meaning of each score for each item, e.g. 1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree ...

Response: Thank you. We included now the possible scores and footnotes of the meaning.

Comment14: A table similar to Table 2, and incorporating the modifications identified in item 13 above, should be created to include the questionnaire items, range of scores and actual scores pertaining to perceived explanations and signs of mental illness. Readers should be directed to this table at appropriate points in the Methods and Results sections.

Response: now we have clarified how these items were measured in the methods section (see response for item 10 and 11) to reduce the number of tables used. In addition, some other details can be referred from previous study from the same project (reference 28).

Comment15: Possible explanations for the study’s findings need greater elaboration in the discussion. For example, in the last few lines of paragraphs 3 and 4 of the discussion section, the possible explanations of findings which are presented are not clearly expressed.

Response: We rephrased and give possible explanation now.

Comment16: The Discussion needs to expand more on the implications of the findings and, flowing logically from the implications, on possible interventions to address undesirable outcomes.

Response: Thank you, now we tried to incorporate the implications of the findings.

Comment17: The first nine lines of paragraph 2 on page 9 are results and should be moved to the Results section.

Response: these are among the major findings in this study and now we put their implication and call for intervention.

Minor Essential Revisions

Comment1: In the final line of the second paragraph on page 2, there is some text that is missing. It needs to be revised.

Response: we revised it now. Thank you.

Comment2: In the first line of the next paragraph, reference is made to "three of the above mentioned perceived explanations" but it is not clear which three. This needs to be clarified.

Response: we rephrased it now. It was to mean supernatural or non-supernatural explanations.
Comment3: The final sentence in the penultimate paragraph on page 3 is unclear. What does "contact to the patients" mean? What are "tested and retested"? The concepts contained in this sentence need to be more clearly expressed.

Response: we restated the statement to avoid ambiguity.

Comment4: The caption for Table 3 should be changed. Score is not an appropriate term for the variables that are being described.

Response: Thank you. We corrected now as follow “Mean score differences of family stigma based on socio-demographic backgrounds in GGFRC, south west Ethiopia, 2012”

Comment5: The regression co-efficient and p-value pertaining to psychosocial and biological explanations as outlined in line 5 of paragraph 2 on page 7 should be included.

Response: Thank you, now we included the regression co-efficient and p-value for psychosocial and biological explanations.

Discretionary Revisions

Comment1: In the second paragraph of the Methods section, directing the reader to Table 2 would be helpful.

Response: Thank you we did accordingly