Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of an information website for caregivers of people with bipolar disorder

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Reviewer: Abebaw Fekadu

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GENERAL COMMENTS
The researchers have identified an important gap in the provision of care for people with bipolar disorder. The website the authors have developed is easy to read and follow.

In relation to the website, a clear disclosure of potential conflict of interest from the outset and details on sponsors is lacking. It would also help to describe the actual qualifications of the authors. What is obvious now is that the website was developed as part of a PhD project. The date when the site was last updated is also not included (at least I could not see it).

Perhaps the major contribution of the publication is methodological: demonstrating in mental health how to assess the acceptability of a web-based mental health information resource. On the other hand, the findings they demonstrate are to be expected given the nature of the sample and the lack of independence. Ideally, the website should have been evaluated by independent evaluators. Nonetheless, the website as well as the study report contributes a new knowledge in the area of bipolar disorder.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS
None

MIONR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS
1) Background:
a) Generally a little too long. It would be easier to read the paper if this section was briefer.
b) There is one reference to "informal" caregivers in the background, introduced a little abruptly. It would help if either the term was defined and used throughout or not used at all. I recommend the latter as the term caregiver is often used to mean "informal" caregivers.

2) Methods/discussions:
a) I am not clear when the follow-ups were done. Does it refer to a repeat visit to the website or an actual follow-up evaluation? Of course a proper follow-up evaluation would strengthen the quality of the study and the follow-up interval should be mentioned. Otherwise, it should not be called follow-up
b) As the authors mention, the main methodological limitation is the very few number of participants that took part in the study. Eventually, it is only 33% of the eligible participants who actually participated. This is likely to lead to a huge selection bias. The main issue is that those who were willing to participate in the study are more likely to have positive attitude for the website. This is especially more likely when the participants are repeat visitors. Although the low number of participants is mentioned as a limitation, how this limitation could affect the findings should be discussed in more depth.

c) One other limitation that should be mentioned is the fact that the evaluation was done by the team that developed the website. This should be discussed as an important limitation.

2) Figure 1: are revisions to the website already made based on the feedbacks? Although Figure ends saying "website updated", the discussion refers to making future revisions based on the feedbacks given. If the latter is the case, the end of the Figure may be unintentionally misleading.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

1) Title: The focus of the evaluation is on the acceptability of the web-based information source. I would recommend using the term acceptability (evaluation of acceptability). The study is not a comprehensive evaluation.

2) Table 1. Presentation could be improved by cutting down the divisions (for example, having a n % row in the top and the mean can be at the bottom. Additionally, the explanations at the bottom of the Table (and all the other Tables) is too long and can be made shorter.

3) Table 2 can be understood better if it was simplified (split in to 2): one table relating to caregivers (i.e., type of care giving and one relating to duration of caring) and a second Table relating to patient characteristics.

4) No need to have 2 columns of Total--it only makes the Table less clear and unwieldy. Readers can easily add up the numbers. Also consider lumping the numbers (%) for not useful/at all columns because the numbers are small any way.

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