Reviewer's report

Title: Over 50 years of trial in Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica: a survey

Version: 2 Date: 1 October 2008

Reviewer: David Schriger

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) The focus of your paper should be improved. It seems that you have at least two:
   a) To examine the quality and characteristics of trials in a typical psychiatric journal over time
   b) To examine the quality and characteristics of trials in the psychiatric literature over time

   While the first purpose is straightforward, the second is problematic since the Acta may not be representative of the psychiatric literature at large. For example, why does the number of trials on depression or on children in this journal matter? What do these numbers represent beyond that that is what Acta publishes? How do they inform the broader issues? Are these items worth mentioning or should the paper solely report items related to quality?

   You should take care to carefully define the purpose(s) of your article and to report only those items relevant to each purpose.

2) Your Background paragraph 1 is unnecessarily lengthy. I don't believe you need to review the history of CTs and RCTs. You can dive in at the need to examine the quality of reports and go from there.

3) When you report the % of articles that are trials, how did you calculate the denominator. What went into this? Were obituaries, news items, letters,... counted? Please describe exactly how you calculated the numerator.

4) On a similar note, when you report that the number of trials varied over time (Figure) you might also present some reference measures (such as total number of journal articles, (or better yet, research articles), impact factor, total published pages...?

Minor Essential Revisions

5) "Peak" not "peek" - in at least two locations

6) You should not use "Journals" in italic in the context you are using them

7) I am surprised that you did not report on the number of trials in the supplement
versus the main journal.

8) estimation not estimated page 6 line 10

Minor Essential Revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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'