Reviewer’s report

Title: Supported local implementation of clinical guidelines in psychiatry: A two-year follow-up

Version: 2 Date: 13 February 2009

Reviewer: Ramesh Raghavan

Reviewer’s report:

This is a much clearer revision, and I thank the authors for considering, and incorporating, prior suggestions and comments.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors should list this study’s principal methodological limitation on p. 17. Their unit of analysis is the clinic, and with 6 clinics there is not a way to adequately control for all omitted variables (at both client as well as clinic level) that might confound results. Hence, there is a serious power issue. While it is unclear if the authors can do something about it, they should at the very least state that they recognize this problem, and downplay some of the strong language suggesting definitive improvements in the implementation clinics versus controls.

Minor Essential Revisions

2. In the interests of brevity, the authors can consider eliminating Tables 1 and 2; these merely show the gender distribution and mean ages of patients at the implementation and control clinics. The point is that these are not different (i.e., there is no selection bias). Given they make these points in the text, these tables seem redundant and can be considered for deletion.

3. Figures 2 and 3 are quite dramatic and illustrate clearly the differences in adherence to standards between implementation and control clinics. These seem to be selective examples of specific clinics (unit a, etc.). A more defensible approach might be to average adherence to standards between all implementation and all control clinics (i.e., just have two lines or plots – one for the intervention and the other for the controls), rather than picking and choosing in this manner.

4. There are some very minor editing and proofing issues that need to be addressed. For example, the authors state, “There is a gap between evidence-based knowledge and used practice…” on p. 4. Do they mean current practice or extant practice?

This is clearly a study that involved a great deal of work, and I commend the authors on its execution.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare I have no competing interests.