Reviewer's report

Title: Conceptualizing and contextualizing functioning in people with severe mental disorders in rural Ethiopia: a qualitative study

Version: 2 Date: 16 September 2014

Reviewer: Alex Cohen

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This is an excellent paper and should be published.

Minor Essential Revisions

p4: The better reference about mortality rates is Cohen et al, which is reference #2. This paper reviews a number of studies that contain evidence about excess mortality among people with schizophrenia.

pp18-19: These pages contain the following statement: “We found that functional impairment in people with SMD is perceived to be the result of not only symptoms associated with the illness, but also a multitude of factors which can be grouped into patient-related factors, caregiver-related factors, social exclusion and economic conditions.” The authors should organise the results section according to these themes.

p22: “A recent meta-analysis of the effect of psychosocial interventions on social functioning in LAMICs found that a range of psychosocial interventions are effective in people with depression and schizophrenia [43]” This statement is inaccurate. In fact, the cited article found positive results for people with depression but no significant benefits for people with schizophrenia. For evidence about the benefit of psychosocial interventions for people with schizophrenia, see the following: Chatterjee S, et al. (2009). Outcomes of people with psychotic disorders in a community-based rehabilitation programme in rural India. Br J Psychiatry 195(5): 433-439.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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