Reviewer's report

Title: Overcoming barriers to recruiting ethnic minorities to mental health research: a typology of recruitment strategies

Version: 3 Date: 25 November 2014

Reviewer: Broderick A Sawyer

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached):

1. A lot of the language throughout the manuscript is disjointed and confusing. I highly recommend the authors go through and make sentences more concise and clear so that readers can easily follow.

2. Going along with revision number 1, after a very strong results section, I felt the discussion section did not do an effective job of summarizing findings and prompting future research in an organized and directive manner. The discussion section had appropriate content, however it had little flow to it and was difficult to read. Specifically, I feel the authors did not use enough commas, making it difficult to comprehend great points being made. I often found myself going back to re-read sentences and this took away from great points the authors were making within this section.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore):

3. Elaboration on some of the recruitment methods. Some of the recruitment suggestions may be in general terms and should be expounded on a bit for clarity.

4. Although the tables are well constructed, it may help readers better understand suggestions if for every technique, the population that each study used was clearly stated within the results section.

5. Lines 32-37: Potentially mention some of the barriers impacting ethnic minority research participation.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct):

Typos or disjointed phrasing (I recommend reading through the entire manuscript to find additional grammatical issues):

6. Line 63: suggested change- "from these ethnic minorities" to "from these ethnic minority groups"
7. Line 64: confusing wording- "underutilisation of with poor health research"

8. Line 66: confusing wording- "less than half of the studies identified, reported ethnic and racial data for their sample"

9. Line 93-94: "ethnic minorities" to "ethnic minority groups"

10. Line 109: "finally" informal language

11. Line 152: "there are difficult to translate and explain scientific phrases" disjointed sentence.

12. Line 252: "flexibly" to "flexibility"

Elaboration or clarification:

13. Line 48: What two barriers?

14. Lines 54-58: More information about specific findings are needed here.

15. Lines 76-82: First it is stated that concerns about mistrust is a dominating barrier among Afro Americans, then it is suggested that we should ensure access to health research instead of trying to change minority attitudes? I know that this claim was made because of enrollment decisions made by ethnic minorities suggested that they were just as likely to participate in research studies, but won't mistrust serve as a significant barrier to treatment progress?

16. Line 85: outline the overarching themes.

The current article is a review of barriers to research participation in ethnic minority populations, and outlines tactics used to negate barriers within particular populations. The importance of the scope of this manuscript cannot be understated, as there is a clear need to have a guide when attempting to research ethnic minority populations. Having a list of strategies that past studies used to effectively recruit ethnic minorities is a resource that will allow future researchers to effectively gather data on hard to reach populations. The dissemination of such strategies will in turn help reduce the cultural mistrust of researchers, helping to negate negative views of mental health care within ethnic minority populations.

Overall the current manuscript effectively presented recruitment strategies outlined by previous researchers, however the manner in which the authors presented the information (namely the writing style within the introduction and discussion sections) made causal conclusions difficult to understand. Research as essential as this should be presented in a clear and concise manner, reducing the likelihood that readers won’t comprehend points made in the manuscript.

Level of interest: An exceptional article
Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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