Reviewer's report

Title: Prospective cohort study of the relationship between neuro-cognition, social cognition and violence in forensic patients with schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders

Version: 3
Date: 4 March 2015

Reviewer: Giancarlo Dimaggio

Reviewer's report:

The paper is timely, highly relevant, scholarly written it does add something to understanding proximal factor of violence in persons with sz.

Major compulsory revisions

There are important gap in the literature review, factor which decrease the potential to understand the whole range of factors related to violence in the ones among these sufferers who are prone to violence.

Most notably

1) Personality-related factors have to be considered. See


2) Then the broader range of mental state understanding abilities is neglected, with relevant studies needing to be discussed. Also the role of self-reflection needs to be into account, as another path to aggression is likely difficulties in making sense of own mental states and regulate them with mechanisms other than aggression.


Bo et al. (2015) Metacognition and general functioning in patients with
schizophrenia and a history of criminal behaviour. Psychiatry Research

The role of psychopathy is part of the picture and the former paper takes into account

A similar aspect is the role of empathy, also needing discussion, see this paper for a review of studies in the field


3) Also the link between social cognition and functioning needs considering studies which measure not only social cognition but other aspects of the metacognitive functioning, see


4) I am quite unhappy about the rough consideration that MATRICS measures cognition which then incudes neurocognition and social cognition. The MSCEIT measures emotional intelligence, which is obviously related to... emotion. I strongly push the authors to be more elegant and take out social cognition from the broader cognitive category (otherwise everything is cognition in the huamn mind and the construct becomes meaningless). I expect such as a change to happen throughout the paper.

Most important is to find a much more nuanced description of the results in the discussion, again with the problem of the umbrella term "cognition" obscuring the different contributions of the different tasks. Overall, the discussion is quite messy about this distinction and it jumps from cognition, to neurocognition to social cognition to neurocognition again. There is a serious effort needed at cleaning the reasoning and clarify the role of basic cognitive impariments and poor emotional intelligence.

5) The role of treatment implication is sketchy. Need reference to social cognition
rehab programs and for the role of psychotherapy, which can be drawn from Lysaker and Dimaggio (2014) Psychological Bulletin

Minor revisions
1) use patients with schizophrenia instead then schizophrenic patients

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.