Reviewer's report

Title: Health system determinants and trends of ICD-10 outpatient psychiatric consultations across Sofala, Mozambique: time-series analyses from 2012 to 2014

Version: 1 Date: 10 July 2015

Reviewer: Inge Petersen

Reviewer's report:

This study reports on mental health care utilization rates in Mozambique. The manuscript provides important information on mental health services in Mozambique and should be accepted for publication following the authors paying attention to the following discretionary and minor compulsory revisions:

1. A health system comprises many other components from inputs, processes and outputs than those examined by this study which focused on clinics size, level, geographic area and presence of specialist mental health practitioners. Given that the authors only focused on selective systems determinants of mental health care diagnosis and utilization this perhaps needs to be reflected more accurately in the title and throughout the paper where the term systems is used.

2. On p. 4, line 41, the authors refer to limited available mental health system data in Mozambique. The reference used is incomplete – so it is unclear where this data is from.

3. Primary, secondary and quaternary facilities in Mozambique need to be defined in terms of services offered.

4. In the absence of epidemiological data of the prevalence of mental disorders in Mozambique, it is suggested that the authors draw on prevalence estimates from the Global Burden of Disease database for the WHO sub-region (http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/en/) in order to compare the population receiving services with the population in need in order to justify statements that the majority of the population do not have access to mental health services.

5. The issue raised on p. 12 re: the validity of the psychiatric technician diagnoses is an important one and raises the need for an evaluation of the diagnoses made by them. In addition, the need for tools such as mhGAP to assist in making diagnoses may be included as a suggestion.

6. Similarly, why there should be a higher rate of diagnoses of epilepsy where psychologists are present is difficult to understand and also raises the question of who is making these diagnoses.

7. The issue of the need to validate the ICD-10 and DSM/replace them with locally adapted tools or systems is an interesting one and perhaps needs to be elaborated on with reference to the age old universalist vs relativist debate.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'