Reviewer’s report

Title: Psycho-education for Substance Use and Antisocial Personality Disorder: A randomized trial

Version: 0 Date: 26 Aug 2015

Reviewer: Mike Crawford

Reviewer’s report:

This is an important and under researched topic. It is clear that the team went to considerable effort to develop and deliver a brief intervention for people with antisocial personality disorder and coexisting substance misuse problems. The team are to be congratulated for completing this trial and their hard work to follow up participants including visiting them in prisons.

My main frustration with the paper is that there is no mention of the impact of the intervention on measures of aggression. The intervention was designed to have an impact on antisocial behaviour and, according to the trial protocol, two of the three primary outcome measures (the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire and Self-Report of Aggression and Social Behaviour Measure) assess this outcome. However there is no mention outcomes related to ASPD in the paper. I appreciate that there is sometimes a pressure to generate multiple publications from the same study, but I think it may be difficult for readers to judge the full value of this intervention if they do not have access to all the study findings.

Other comments

1) The level of attendance at sessions is low, but not unexpected. I think it would help if the median number of sessions attended (two) was included in the abstract of the paper.

2) What if any supervision did therapists receive during the course of the study?

3) It would be helpful to include a table of baseline scores so that readers can judge whether groups were balanced. It is possible that there were important differences that did not reach statistical significance so I think that readers need more than the text that is currently provided.

4) There are some minor typographical errors in the paper e.g. in section on ILC - awareness raising rather than rising and 'The first session focuses' or 'The first session was focused on..' rather than The first section focus on the'.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Unable to assess

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If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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