Reviewer’s report

Title: Community-based psychosocial interventions for people with schizophrenia in low and middle-income countries: systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 1 Date: 14 May 2017

Reviewer: Kyle Minor

Reviewer's report:

The current study synthesizes the literature on psychosocial interventions in low to middle income countries (LMIC). They found that interventions improve a variety of outcomes, including symptoms and functioning, in schizophrenia in LMICs. It adds new studies to a relatively recent meta-analysis (2012) to provide a contribution to the literature. Strengths of the study include the meta-analysis element and the clear description of findings. However, there are some areas that should be considered and revised prior to publication.

1. The major contribution of this paper is the role of psychosocial interventions in LMICs. However, the authors do not make a strong case for what this meta-analysis provides. For instance, what are the unique challenges faced by LMICs in implementing these types of treatments? These are mentioned by the authors but never discussed in any detail.

2. In line with the above point, why are certain types of treatments emphasized (e.g., community-based rehabilitation, self-help and support groups) in recommendations for LMICs above others? In general, the authors should focus more on how LMICs differ from higher income countries and make the case as to why it outcomes should (or should not) differ in LMICs. The importance of evaluating this question, specifically within LMICs, should be a major focus of the Intro and Discussion. As it stands, I did not get a sense for why this is a critical issue (and I do believe it is).

3. How do middle income countries differ from low income countries in terms of support for and barriers to mental health? How might culture (or other factors) play a role in addition to income?

4. In the discussion, the authors mention that 'symptoms and functioning are not necessarily correlated.' I think meta-analysis on those with schizophrenia would not support this statement.

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?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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

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