Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of an interaction-skills training for reducing the burden of family caregivers of patients with severe mental illness: a pre-posttest design.

Version: 0 Date: 09 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Domenico Giacco

Reviewer's report:

This paper reports on an interesting study evaluating effects of an interactive skills training specifically devoted to caregivers of psychiatric patients on their perceptions of self-efficacy and burden. The evaluation was carried out on a cohort of caregivers with pre-post assessments at baseline, following end of the intervention and three months after that.

Some aspects of the study should be clarified:

- How did the authors check that the patients whom the caregivers were relatives of met the criteria for "having a severe mental illness"? It would be good to clarify whether the criteria were checked independently from caregiver report and how.

- Was informed consent for contacting the carers sought from patients (especially if the carer was recruited through registered patients)?

- Were there some standard criteria for excluding participants from analysis based on "incomplete data", i.e. how many missing values should have been there to warrant exclusion of a participant from analysis?

- Was there any link between appreciation of training and change in study outcomes (self-efficacy and burden reduction)?
- I understand that the SEQ instrument is now being formally and comprehensively tested for its psychometric properties. Yet, I feel the few parameters reported in the limitation session (4th limitation) of the discussion would rather belong to the result section of this paper.

**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.
No

**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 recommend additional statistical review

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:
Acceptable

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