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: 21 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Sharon Lawn

Reviewer's report:
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This is a straightforward pretest-posttest design study with a reasonable sample of mental health carers whose levels of perceived burden and self-efficacy were measured before and immediately after a specifically developed training program and then 3 months after the training.

I have a few comments that will hopefully improve the paper:

-The term 'patients' is used throughout; however, given the study is focused on family caregivers, the term seems out of place because the support they provide is not 'clinical' and they wouldn't call them patients. 'Person' might be a better term to use in this context.

p.6 This section about the use of the mat needs more explanation. It isn't clear whether the person with mental illness is actually present. Once the carer practices several interaction skills to handle difficult confrontations, you say that both of them are standing on the red mat. This suggests that the person is also involved in the training; but this is unclear. If it is a role-play, then how is this constructed to mirror the real experience that the carer must learn to overcome once they go home.

Also more detail about the homework assignments is needed. The table of information about each meeting doesn't really describe this.
More could be said about how each week builds on the next and how they link together. Also, what happens if a participant doesn't or can't attend each week?

p.7 line 34 - the IEQ has already appeared earlier in full words, so the acronym is fine here.

p.9 line 22 - there appear to be some missing word at the end of this sentence.

p.11 - line 25 - 'Rose et al.[19] claimed…'

p.11 - line34 - the statement about the move to more ambulatory care and more responsibility put on carers should be supported with evidence/reference.

p.12 - line15 - information about the SEQ could be clearer

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**

If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**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 am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**

Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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