Reviewer’s report

Title: Functional recovery in patients with schizophrenia. Recommendations from a panel of experts

Version: 1 Date: 09 Jan 2018

Reviewer: Erika Jaaskelainen

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer's comments to the authors

This manuscript (Functional recovery in patients with schizophrenia. Recommendations from a panel of experts) is an interesting study on aspects of functional recovery in schizophrenia. The topic is very important and there are some interesting results. The manuscript could be considered for publication in BMC Psychiatry, but before that, there are some limitations and points that should be noticed:

Main concerns:

- The title of the manuscript is "Functional recovery in patients with schizophrenia. Recommendations from a panel of experts", but I do not find any recommendations from the manuscript. The authors now mostly describe the results of Delphi survey, but mostly do not give deeper discussion nor recommendations based on the survey. I suggest that the authors revise the discussion and give their recommendations for clinics and research.

- Please revise and make clearer the aims of this study and paper.

- The methods -section is now relatively short and cursory. Please describe the methods in more detail, e.g. When was the survey made? Were there any non-participants (report % of those who did not respond in 1. And 2. Round)? What were the criteria for the selection of experts? How had they "proven" their expertise? How about anonymity? How was the survey performed (via electronic questionnaire, via email etc)? Please take a look on e.g. this for advice: Sinha IP, Smyth RL, Williamson PR. Using the Delphi technique to determine which outcomes to measure in clinical trials: recommendations for the future based on a systematic review of existing studies. PLoS Med. 2011 Jan 25;8(1):e1000393.

- The authors mention systematic literature review, but do not present any methods or results for this. In addition, the references look relatively old. Please describe the systematic review more comprehensively.
- In Discussion the results of the survey, the results of literature review and maybe also opinions of the authors are mixed and it is difficult to have a clear picture on what are the expert opinions and what is the scientific evidence. Please revise the Discussion. I think some parts of the Discussion, i.e. the results of the Delphi study could be relocated to Results- section, and only main findings and interpretations of the survey should be discussed in Discussion.

Other comments:

- Is there any reference for the cut off for consensus/non-consensus that the authors have used?

- Statistical methods?

- Please describe the participants some more: age range, gender, from both inpatients/outpatients settings, from both large and small units?

- There seems to be mistake in online supplement Table presenting the criteria for consensus (should be: at least 2/3 instead of 1/3?). Please correct. In addition, please provide title for this table.

- The median for "concept of functional recovery" is different in text (6.06) and in supplement table 1 (7). Please correct.

- Table S4, question 56: is the median right? It is 7 but "no consensus"?

- It would be good to present somewhere summary of the main definitions of functional recovery in schizophrenia, based on earlier literature.

- In discussion, Assessment of functional recovery the authors write: "…and the heterogeneity in their clinical course, which may lead to inconsistencies between the outcome of functioning scales and milestone achievement in some patients [30]." I do not understand this part of the sentence. Please revise.

- Regarding the results on "Psychosocial interventions and functional recovery": There was agreement for most of the questions about most effective psychosocial intervention, i.e. 5 interventions is most effective. Please discuss this result of the survey.
In "Pharmacological treatment and functional recovery" the authors write too optimistically about the role of antipsychotics in functional recovery or they do not discuss enough the results of the survey regarding this:

* "It was also agreed that the various antipsychotic agents have different impacts on functional recovery, with second-generation antipsychotics being associated with greater rates of functional recovery." Please give more references for this, or revise the text. To my knowledge, there is serious lack of high quality studies on effectiveness of antipsychotics on especially functional recovery. Are there studies comparing rates functional recovery in second vs. first generation antipsychotics? Please give reference. Please remember also difference between remission and recovery.

* Please revise also the sentence "Despite the usefulness of antipsychotic agents in achieving functional recovery"

* You may want to consider also discussing the functional remission results by Wunderink et al. 2013 in JAMA.

Please revise and complete Limitations –section

**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.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

**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

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal