Reviewer’s report

Title: Lower versus higher frequency of sessions in starting outpatient mental health care and the risk of a chronic course; a naturalistic cohort study

Version: 0  Date: 21 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Sebastien Urben

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for having the opportunity to read this interesting manuscript. The study seems worthy and has the potential to add important information to the literature. However, some concerns should be addressed before I could commend the manuscript for publication.

Abstract
Line 57. "patient's treatment outcome". Could the authors be more specific and describe their measure.

Introduction
Page 4 line 98. "These studies…". Which one? Please clarify.
The other important variables already observed to moderate or predict the psychiatric treatment outcomes should be stated in the introduction. They are included in the analyses and described by the authors in the method/results section, but they should be described in the introduction to enhance the impact of the manuscript.

Methods
The category of diagnoses are very heterogeneous. Anxiety and depressive disorders fit well together. But it is less obvious to include personality disorders. Which types of personality disorders are included in the sample? Authors should strengthen their rationale to do so. Perhaps also it is necessary to compute separate analyses (see below for further comment on this aspect). The reliability of the OQ-45.2 in this sample should be reported; as well other information (from literature) about the validity of the instruments if available.
Could the authors provide more details for the RCI computation, for the reader who are not used to this procedure.
GAF measure should be described.
Page. 10 line 255-256. "Because all of these variables could have..." should be supported by references.
I think that medication should be added as a potential cofounders and thus taken into account in the analyses.

Results
Page 14. Line 327-330. These results should be stated in the discussion and interpreted. From my reading, it means that not only frequency predict the outcome but also these variables. Thus, this should be discussed and added in the conclusion (also for the abstract's conclusion and results paragraph).
Page 14. Line 333-336. This result should also be discussed.
To affirm that results are independent of diagnostic groups: by diagnostic groups (at least internalizing vs personality disorders) analyses should be computed; or the interaction between diagnostic groups and frequency should be examined.

Discussion
Page 16. Please rewrite the first paragraph. It seems that some inconsistencies arise from the formulation.
Limitations should be stated just before the conclusions (in a single paragraph).
The practical implications could be strengthened to enhance the impact of the manuscript.
Some results (see above, comment on results) should be also interpreted in more details.

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.

Yes

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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Acceptable

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