Reviewer’s report

Title: Predictors of Outcome in Early Onset Schizophrenia: A 10-Year Follow-Up Study

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Reviewer: Svein Friis

Reviewer's report:

The authors deserve credit for providing a long term follow-up study of Early Onset Schizophrenia. We clearly need more knowledge of this disorder. As the study comes from China, it also contributes with important cross-cultural information.

The study concludes that the long term outcome is better than generally believed, and that age at disease onset does not predict long-term functional outcome.

The study has many strong aspects, and the authors may well be right in their conclusions. But, as the authors themselves point to, the study has some severe limitations. They clearly are right that the retrospective design opens up for the possibility of recall bias, and that the relatively high loss at follow-up may weaken the generalizability. However, I am even more concerned with the fact that for 62 of the 65 follow-up patients data were based solely on information from parents or family members. I miss information of any attempt to estimate reliability or validity of the data.

The paper lacks a discussion of how these weaknesses could have influenced the results.

I also miss a discussion concerning the fact that there is fairly limited variability of age at onset. Their conclusion about the lacking importance of age at onset, is not necessarily valid outside an EOS-population.

As a conclusion I think that this is important with EOS studies from different parts of the world, and that this study merits publication given that the authors discuss in more detail study weaknesses and their potential influence on the results.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Does the work include the necessary controls?
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Unable to assess

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I recommend additional statistical review

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

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