Reviewer’s report

Title: Human rights and mental health in post-apartheid South Africa: lessons from health care professionals working with suicidal inmates in the prison system

Version: 0 Date: 12 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Ritsuko Kakuma

Reviewer’s report:

This is a very interesting paper addressing an important and often neglected issue about the importance of quality mental health service in correctional systems - both in high as well as low- and middle-income country settings. The methodology is sound and the findings presented clearly. Nevertheless, there are a few questions around clarification that I would like to raise for consideration by the authors.

- BACKGROUND: For those not familiar with the South African setting, more background contextual information would contribute to better understanding and interpreting the findings. These would include for instance, an overview of the system, governance structures, information about the facilities (size, how many providers, how many inmates per facility, what mental health services are supposed to be or actually delivered etc).

- METHODS: I wonder if a bit more information about what was asked during the interviews could be included. E.g., were they standard questions such as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats?

- There were no explicit mention of gender issues. Were the two correctional facilities all-male inmate facilities?

- ETHICS: Often, ethics application numbers are included when indicating ethics approval. Are these required for this particular journal?

- RESULTS: Some description of the study participants would also be useful in understanding the source of the opinions. E.g., gender, duration of working in the prisons, provider type, full-time at prison vs part time service provision etc.

- Definition of suicidal inmates: I'm not sure if this information is available but were they inmates known to have mental health issues / be suicidal since before imprisonment or do many become suicidal in prison?

- FORMAT: Quotes longer than a few lines are typically presented as separate and individual indented paragraphs but not in this manuscript. This may be due to the guidelines of the journal.

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.

Yes

**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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

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