

BMJ Open-2010-000017

Doctors accessing mental health services: An exploratory study

Reviewer 1: Puddester, Derek

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No conflict of interest issues to report

The Study	Yes	No
Is the research question clearly defined?	✓	
Is the overall study design appropriate and adequate to answer the research question?	✓	
Are the participants adequately described, their conditions defined, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria described?	✓	
Are the patients representative of actual patients the evidence might affect?	✓	
Are the methods adequately described?	✓	
Is the main outcome measure clear?	✓	
Are the abstract/summary/key messages/limitations accurate?	✓	
Are the statistical methods described?	✓	
Are they appropriate?	✓	
Is the standard of written English acceptable for publication?	✓	
Are the references up to date and relevant? (If not, please provide details of significant omissions below.)	✓	
Do any supplemental documents e.g. a CONSORT checklist, contain information that should be better reported in the manuscript, or raise questions about the work?		✓

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION (For articles reporting research findings only)	Yes	No
Do the results answer the research question?	✓	
Are they credible?	✓	
Are they well presented?	✓	
Are the interpretation and conclusions warranted by and sufficiently derived from/focused on the data?	✓	
Are they discussed in the light of previous evidence?	✓	
Is the message clear?	✓	

REPORTING AND ETHICS	Yes	No
Is the article reported in line with the appropriate reporting statement or checklist (e.g. CONSORT)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are research ethics (e.g. consent, ethical approval) addressed appropriately?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Is the article free from any concerns about publication ethics (e.g. plagiarism, fabrication, redundant publication, undeclared conflicts of interest)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

If you answered No to any of the above, please supply details below or contact the editorial office.

req Recommendation

Accept

Minor Revision

Major Revision

Reject

Would you be willing to review a revision of this manuscript?

Yes

No

Comments

If you have any further comments for the authors please enter them below.

This is an important study and I applaud your efforts. Clearly, the sample size is small but this is the inherent challenge of this sort of research. A qualitative approach was savvy and I hope in your future work you consider mixed methods as a potential to increase generalizability and reduce bias. Really, quite well done and an important addition to the literature.

Reviewer 2: Tyssen, Reidar

Reidar Tyssen
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 Department of Behavioural Sciences
 Institute of Basic Medical Sciences
 Faculty of Medicine
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 Norway

The Study	Yes	No
Is the research question clearly defined?		✓
Is the overall study design appropriate and adequate to answer the research question?	✓	
Are the participants adequately described, their conditions defined, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria described?	✓	
Are the patients representative of actual patients the evidence might affect?	✓	
Are the methods adequately described?		✓
Is the main outcome measure clear?		✓
Are the abstract/summary/key messages/limitations accurate?	✓	
Are the statistical methods described?		✓
Are they appropriate?	✓	
Is the standard of written English acceptable for publication?	✓	
Are the references up to date and relevant? (If not, please provide details of significant omissions below.)		✓
Do any supplemental documents e.g. a CONSORT checklist, contain information that should be better reported in the manuscript, or raise questions about the work?	✓	

If you answered No to any of the above, please supply details below.

- 1) The research question is quite precisely described in the abstract but should be repeated with the same accuracy at the end of the introduction where it is blurred.
- 2) The methods and statistics used, and the outcome achieved, all build on Grounded Theory. Was this the original Glaser & Strauss (1967) approach, which is clearly more inductive, or the modified approach of Strauss & Corbin (1998) with a somewhat different coding? The latter could be suspected here, since a semi-structured interview was used with possible guiding of the responses and verification of themes.
The checklist referred to in line 44 on Page 5 should be given as an appendix.
- 3) There is very limited reference to other research on mental health and illness behaviour among doctors in the introduction. This includes both quantitative and qualitative studies (e.g. Ingstad B & Christie V, Anthropology & Medicine 2001; Hahn RA, Med Antropol Q 1985)

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION (For articles reporting research findings only) **Yes No**

Do the results answer the research question?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are they credible?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are they well presented?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are the interpretation and conclusions warranted by and sufficiently derived from/focused on the data?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Are they discussed in the light of previous evidence?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the message clear?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

If you answered No to any of the above, please supply details below.

- 4) The conclusion should include the main findings and not only suggestions for further research.
5) The discussion ought to start with the main findings and relate these to other relevant research, for instance on illness behaviour and help-seeking among doctors. The Strengths and limitations part should be put backwards, before the conclusion. One of authors has patient experience herself; how can this have influenced the report? (could be both a strength and a limitation...)

REPORTING AND ETHICS **Yes No**

Is the article reported in line with the appropriate reporting statement or checklist (e.g. CONSORT)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are research ethics (e.g. consent, ethical approval) addressed appropriately?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Is the article free from any concerns about publication ethics (e.g. plagiarism, fabrication, redundant publication, undeclared conflicts of interest)?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you answered No to any of the above, please supply details below or contact the editorial office.

- 6) Is it a conflict of interest that both authors are so closely knit to the network of doctors seeking psychiatric treatment? How may this have influenced the study?

req Recommendation

- Accept
- Minor Revision
- Major Revision
- Reject

Would you be willing to review a revision of this manuscript?

- Yes
- No

Comments

If you have any further comments for the authors please enter them below.

This is an original and very important study, and it is well worth further work in order to make it suitable for publication.
In my opinion the introduction and the discussion are the weakest parts of the study, and a major revision of these parts is required.
Please adhere to the instructions for authors and use double spaced text in references and elsewhere.

Authors Response to Decision Letter for (BMJ Open-2010-000017)

Doctors accessing mental health services: An exploratory study

Thank you for the reviewers' helpful comments and the opportunity to revise and resubmit our paper. We have listed the recommendations below and our responses and accounts of how we have revised the paper to incorporate the recommendations. To clarify which is which we have put inverted commas around the cited reviewers' comments.

"1) The research question is quite precisely described in the abstract but should be repeated with the same accuracy at the end of the introduction where it is blurred."

We have amended the introduction accordingly.

"2) The methods and statistics used, and the outcome achieved, all build on Grounded Theory. Was this the original Glaser & Strauss (1967) approach, which is clearly more inductive, or the modified approach of Strauss & Corbin (1998) with a somewhat different coding? The latter could be suspected here, since a semi-structured interview was used with possible guiding of the responses and verification of themes."

We have used both the original Glaser and Strauss (1967) and the modified approach and have acknowledged this.

"The checklist referred to in line 44 on Page 5 should be given as an appendix."

We considered adding an appendix but there is considerable detail re the interview process in the text. The checklist was tentative and emerging. We have specified this in the text and listed the issues relevant to this paper.

"3) There is very limited reference to other research on mental health and illness behaviour among doctors in the introduction. This includes both quantitative and qualitative studies (e.g. Ingstad B & Christie V, *Anthropology & Medicine* 2001; Hahn RA, *Med Antropol Q* 1985)"

The approach we have taken in the introduction has been to clarify the importance of the study rather than to review the literature. We have expanded the coverage of the literature and referenced additional relevant papers both in the introduction and the discussion.

"4) The conclusion should include the main findings and not only suggestions for further research."

The conclusion has been amended to present the results tentatively along with the need for further research.

"5) The discussion ought to start with the main findings and relate these to other relevant research, for instance on illness behaviour and help-seeking among doctors."

We have started the discussion with the summary of main findings and included more discussion of our findings in relationship to other relevant research.

"The Strengths and limitations part should be put backwards, before the conclusion."

We were not clear exactly what was meant the discussion with address the strengths and limitations of the study early in the discussion. This is not an uncommon practice in the literature and we feel it is particularly appropriate for this paper given the importance of the ground it breaks, but the significant limitations which relate to the challenges in studying this area.

"One of authors has patient experience herself; how can this have influenced the report? (could be both a strength and a limitation...)"

Many aspects of the researchers could influence this study, as is so for any study. This is the reason we included information about the researchers in the introduction in order to be as explicit as possible as to what the major factors influencing the study might be. We have addressed this more specifically in the strengths and limitations section.

"6) Is it a conflict of interest that both authors are so closely knit to the network of doctors seeking

psychiatric treatment? How may this have influenced the study?"

We would not describe ourselves as 'closely knit' to the group of participants. Only one of the doctor patients was well known to both researchers. Four others were well known to one of the researchers but not to the other. Four were not personally known to either researcher and three had had contact with one or both of the researchers in a professional colleague context but were not well known. Neither would we describe the doctor patients as a network. Snowball sampling was used and two of the doctor patients were recruited by knowing someone else in the study but most of the doctor patients did not know each other.

However, there was an issue of personal knowing of participants and we have clarified and addressed it in the strengths and limitations section.
