**Format for ANSWERING REVIEWERS**

March 25, 2012

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 2432-review.doc).

# Title: Are gender and knowledge influencing an intervention for reducing stigma of mental illness?

**Author:** Francisco Martínez-Zambrano, Esther García-Morales, Mar García-Franco, Jose Miguel, Raul Villellas, Gemma Pascual, Otilia Arenas, Susana Ochoa

**Name of Journal:** *World Journal of Psychiatry*

**ESPS Manuscript NO:** 2432

The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of reviewers:

1 Format has been updated

2 Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewer

(1) *We agree with the reviewer that the study could be more interesting assessing stigma over a long time period, however the design of the study was those exposed in the manuscript and it is difficult to change now. The data show differences in the assessment of stigma after this intervention but we do not assure that this will maintained over time. We have added this comment in the limitation section: “A second limitation is that we observed modifications in the perception of stigma after the intervention, but we could not be certain that these changes would be maintained over time “*

(2) *We have revised the presentation of data, references and tables according to the normative of the journal. Moreover, a native English has revised all the manuscript.*

(3) *We agree with the reviewer that the results could be generalised to low-middle socioeconomic group of student. We have added a comment in the limitation section: “The intervention should be repeated in another socioeconomic group of student in order to confirm the results.”*

*The intervention design was based in previous research conducted and in our self experience.*

*We have added a note including this information: “The interventions were based on previous research studies and on the need for information detected by our team in community interventions. “*

*We have performed the Bonferroni correction and the level of significance have been modified to p=0.01instead of p=0.05. Some changes in the results and discussion section of the manuscript have been performed related to this modification in the significance level*

*The title was being modified as: “Intervention for reducing stigma: assessing the influence of gender and knowledge”*

3 References and typesetting were corrected

We have added a annex with all the responses related to the comments of the reviewers.

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Psychiatry.*

Sincerely yours,

Susana Ochoa

Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Deu.

Dr Pujades, 42

Sant Boi de Llobregat

Barcelona (Spain)

[sochoa@pssjd.org](mailto:sochoa@pssjd.org)

**Annex: Responses to reviewers.**

**Reviewer 1**

The title of the paper reflects the content of the study. The study is well written with a good presentation and readability. The review of the relevant research literature is solid. The study hypothesis is clear and the methods are clearly articulated. The statistical analysis is well presented and appropriate in light of the intervention method used in the study. The study cohort consisted of only 62 secondary school students with ages 14-16. This is a very small study group. Additionally, the study consisted of a pre and post intervention design methodology. This presents major limitations with regard to generalizations of the findings. As pointed out by the authors, there is no control group used in this study. One needs to wonder if attitudes toward people with mental illness among adolescents would be different after a year of the intervention. A post evaluation following the intervention is a valid research methodology but is rather limited to actually measuring change in stigma over time. A longitudinal study would yield more reliable data.

*We agree with the reviewer that the study could be more interesting assessing stigma over a long time period, however the design of the study was those exposed in the manuscript and it is difficult to change now. The data show differences in the assessment of stigma after this intervention but we do not assure that this will maintained over time. We have added this comment in the limitation section: “A second limitation is that we observed modifications in the perception of stigma after the intervention, but we could not be certain that these changes would be maintained over time.”*

**Reviewer 2**

Reviewer's report. Authors of paper entitled “Are gender and knowledge influencing an intervention for reducing stigma of mental illness?” present original data interesting for specialists in this field of psychiatry. Regardless of being performed at good technological level, the study is interesting inasmuch as such studies are rare and conclusions of authors are well documented. Conceptual revisions: The manuscript seems to require minor improvements. Authors have to pay some more attention to manuscript presentation. This concerns accuracy in presentation of data, references and Tables. Level of interest An article of minor interest Quality of written English. Accepted Statistical review. No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

*We have revised the presentation of data, references and tables according to the normative of the journal.*

**Reviewer 3**

**Are gender and knowledge influencing an intervention for reducing stigma of mental illness?**

This paper evaluates the effectiveness of a psychosocial programme on the level of stigma against mental illness in secondary school students aged 14-16. It is a prospective interventional study whereby two sessions were included in the timetable of students over a period of two weeks that were designed to combat stigma. The levels of stigma were measured before and after the two sessions using the Opinions on Mental Illness scale. The groups were stratified according to gender and whether or not the students knew someone with mental illness. According to this study, the tested intervention resulted in significantly improved scores for all subgroups, indicating that the students felt they were ‘superior’ to those with mental illness and had erroneous belief that mental illness results from bad interpersonal experiences. Specifically, the male subgroup improved in their attitude towards treatment of patients with mental illness and in the female subgroup there was a reduced belief that patients with mental illness are dangerous. Those who knew someone with mental illness had a reduction in paternalistic attitudes towards patients with mental illness and an improved attitude towards treatment. Those who did not know anyone with mental illness also had an improved attitude towards treatment and had a reduced belief that those with mental illness are dangerous.

This is an interesting study. It is well structured and for the most part flows very well. However, clarity needs improvement as there are typos, grammatical errors and some poorly worded sentences. The study is well considered with a comprehensive limitations section.

The authors might want to address the following points in order to improve the overall quality of their manuscript:

- Firstly, it would be useful to know whether socioeconomic status affects stigma and response to psychoeducation such as that used in this study. This may affect the generalizability of results from this study (on low-middle socioeconomic level students) to the general population of young students.

*We agree with the reviewer that the results could be generalised to low-middle socioeconomic group of student. We have added a comment in the limitation section: “The intervention should be repeated in another socioeconomic group of student in order to confirm the results.”*

- Secondly, it should be detailed how the intervention design was constructed e.g. is it based on interventions in previous studies?

*The intervention design was based in previous research conducted and in our self experience.*

*We have added a note including this information: “The interventions were based on previous research studies and on the need for information detected by our team in community interventions. “*

- Thirdly, with regards to the statistical analysis, the distribution of the data and significance level used should be made explicit in the paper. Furthermore, multiple comparisons are being made so a method to correct for multiple comparisons should   
be used e.g. Bonferroni method. Finally, have the authors controlled for different baseline scores when evaluating the degree of intervention effectiveness?

*We have performed the Bonferroni correction and the level of significance have been modified to p=0.01instead of p=0.05. Some changes in the results and discussion section of the manuscript have been performed related to this modification in the significance level*

- Fourthly the title is not clear and should be rewritten.

*The title was being modified as: “Intervention for reducing stigma: assessing the influence of gender and knowledge.”*