

Review of: "The Effect of Group-Based Family Orientation to Community Mental Health Services"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The proposed paper seems to be very interesting, and I think that the scientific contribution it could give to literature is significant. There are, however, some key points that should be mentioned:

1. I would explain in more detail the rationale of the study and the objectives it aims to achieve. Please explain, in the Introduction section, any lack of knowledge on this issue and, in line with the comments read so far on the website, the list of the main studies done. Study objectives, purposes, and the general characteristics of the population must be clearly stated, along with the purpose for which the study is conducted.
2. In order to provide to the reader a clearer framework useful to better understand and interpret the results of the study, I suggest to explain more precisely the parameters of the study, the variables that will be examined, and, more generally, the data sources (e.g., how is the readmission rate estimated? Add more details). It is essential to ensure that the study is reproducible in addition to making it clearer (i.e., understanding the limitations and strengths of the data). Therefore, I would like to add a few more specifications, perhaps accompanied by references.
3. In the Methods section, the study participants' selection (i.e., inclusion and exclusion criteria) and the time periods (including the beginning and end of the recruitment period for the two-sample comparison, the start and end of the follow-up period, the total duration of the study, when participants begin to be followed-up and when they leave the study) should be better explained with reference to the data. In this case, as well, in order for the study to be reproducible and generalizable, everything related to selection of the cohorts (for example, diagnostic codes and/or interventions of interest) and, in this case, the groups analysed (and their classification) should be clearly reported.
4. The study design used is pertinent and innovative; however, given the controversies related to the application of this design^[1] it would be necessary to add more specifications and integrate with sensitivity analyses (as reported by Rosenbaum PR.^[2]).
5. A pre-established alpha significance level and the software used to conduct the analyses should also be disclosed in the materials and methods section; in addition, please, the statistical tests that were used to compare outcome rates of the two groups compared, as well as the p-values (related to % reductions and various comparisons) in all tables, should be reported.
6. The results of the study appear to be unclear. There is a lack of clarity in both the structure of the tables in which the results are reported and the definition of the time periods to which the results relate. Also, the groups referred to in the tables are incorrect; they are not described in Methods; thus, please add more details on these issues in the related sections.

7. A statistical test that clearly defined the period in which the results obtained relate would improve the comment in table 4 (see previous comments on the Methods part). Could this result be explained by the adopted study design?
8. Great for having added study limitations to the Discussion section (referring to the latest version available). In order to enhance the value of the proposed work, I would also like to highlight the strengths of the study conducted, such as the data source and study design. The adopted study design has several advantages and disadvantages when compared to other types, including: greater external validity than most experiments; greater internal validity than other types of non-experimental designs; however, retrospective data that have already been collected for other purposes can be inaccurate, incomplete, or difficult to access at the same time.

References

1. [^] Frank de Vocht, Srinivasa Vittal Katikireddi, Cheryl McQuire, Kate Tilling, et al. (2021). Conceptualising natural and quasi experiments in public health. *BMC Med Res Methodol*, vol. 21 (1). doi:10.1186/s12874-021-01224-x.
2. [^] Paul R. Rosenbaum. (2015). How to See More in Observational Studies: Some New Quasi-Experimental Devices. *Annu. Rev. Stat. Appl.*, vol. 2 (1), 21-48. doi:10.1146/annurev-statistics-010814-020201.