

## **Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** Is it worth investing in mental health promotion and prevention of mental illness? A systematic review of the evidence from economic evaluations

### **Authors:**

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over

Dear editors,

on behalf of my co-authors Ingrid Zechmeister and David McDaid, I am submitting the **revised manuscript** with the title '**Is it worth investing in mental health promotion and prevention of mental illness? A systematic review of the evidence from economic evaluations**' for publication in 'BMC Public Health'.

We are grateful for the valuable comments of the reviewers and have amended the manuscript according to their suggestions. Please find below the description of the revisions we undertook.

**Reviewer 1:**

1. We left the title unchanged as we find it appropriately addresses the subject of the article
2. The suggested reference has been included.
3. The suggested reference has been included and the sentence has been revised.
4. The methodological controversies have been removed and partly integrated into the discussion section
5. We included an additional reference. However, the evidence we cite here is from the WHO mental health report. Thus, we used this reference instead of the reviewer's suggestions.
6. We agree with the reviewer that this is an important database and have checked it in order to identify further relevant publications. We identified some effectiveness studies, however, we did not find any additional *economic evaluation* back to the year 1995.
7. The reference year for price level adjustment has been included
8. The reasons have been stated in the flow chart (figure 1) and a list of excluded studies has been put in an appendix
9. We have corrected the paragraph according to the reviewer's suggestion
10. As the reviewer notes, this comment is his personal judgement which we didn't include into the manuscript.
11. An additional reference has been included and the paragraph has been revised.
12. We have included the information that some initiatives with respect to 'retrospective evaluation' have been started.

13. The paragraph has been amended and the reference to the 'holistic approach' has been removed. However, the authors would like to stress that some further development of the methodology is important from their point of view.

## **Reviewer 2:**

### Specific reviewing questions

1. No revisions suggested
2. Some improvements in terms of replication of the work have been made (e.g. inclusion of a list of excluded studies, inclusion of reasons for excluded full-texts, more detailed definitions such as definition of prevention etc.)
3. The presentation of study results has been revised. In particular, where appropriate, evaluation results have been presented both in terms of efficacy and cost-effectiveness
4. No revisions suggested
5. Some minor amendments have been made in the discussion section according to the comments in the paper
6. All three co-authors felt that it would not be a methodologically sound approach to provide some 'summary cost-benefit ratio' as suggested by the reviewer. Due to the great heterogeneity of the studies included (both in terms of interventions evaluated and methods applied) such a global statement is not possible to integrate. However, we included some more information on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness results where we described the individual studies. Additionally, major limitations of each of the studies are included.
7. A final language check has been made by the co-author who is a native-speaker

### General recommendations

1. Updated references on meta-analyses have been included on p. 3
2. The reference for the definition of prevention plus some description in the text has been included on p. 6
3. As stated previously, the authors felt that it would not be a methodologically sound approach to include a global conclusion on cost benefit or cost effectiveness of mental health promotion or prevention of mental disorders. As outlined in the paper the studies were much too diverse to summarise them in one global cost effectiveness ratio.

4. Wherever possible, a summary of mental health outcomes of each intervention has been included in the result section
5. Major limitations have been described for each of the studies in the result section as well as in the discussion. A detailed and systematic quality assessment of each single study would go beyond the scope of this paper and can therefore not be covered within this paper.
6. References have been included (e.g. p. 3)
7. References for included studies have been included in table 1; for excluded full-texts a reference list has been included in an appendix.
8. see comment no. 7
9. All comments in the text have been read carefully and most of them have been taken into account in the revised manuscript.

#### Quality of written English

Where stated by the reviewer sentences have been revised and a final language check has been carried out by the native speaking co-author.

#### **Reviewer 3:**

No revisions suggested

We hope that our revisions will be accepted and look forward to the publication.

Yours sincerely,

Reinhold Kilian