symptoms with the same disorder, but this could be construed as them only giving a diagnosis as they cannot admit they are unsure what to do.

Strengths of Rosenhan’s study’s validity were that all doctors and nurses that took part behaved naturally because they were unaware they were being studied, an advantage as there were no demand characteristics and real life behaviour was being recorded, and the study highlighted the issue with validity of psychiatric diagnoses making it very valuable and relevant to reality. This is a strength as it made sure diagnoses made in reality were recorded and wasn’t an experiment to highlight the problems.

Another strength of the validity was it was a field study using twelve real hospitals, meaning the study had high ecological validity. This means it was true to life and findings can be applied to reality – a strength. A weakness of the validity however is the study lacks mundane realism because although it showed that the psychiatric system can be tricked doesn’t mean it doesn’t work effectively with genuine patient’s assessments, however on the contrary, the follow-up study showed that genuine patients were mistaken for pseudopatients sent by Rosenhan, which was untrue.

Although only 12 hospitals were used and some pseudopatients went to more than one hospital as there was only eight of them, the researchers ensured that they were representative of the range of hospitals available to patients. This is an advantage as findings can be generalised to a broad range of hospitals, not just one type.

**Alternative Evidence**

Rosenhan used a field study to investigate whether mental health professionals can identify ‘normality’. He found that all of the pseudopatients were admitted to hospital and stayed there for, on average, 19 days until they were considered ‘well enough’ to be released. It was concluded that mental health professionals cannot distinguish between ‘sane’ and ‘insane’ people and questioned the validity of the diagnosis of mental disorders.

Other studies have been done within this area of research. One such study is by McEwan (1999). The novelist Ian McEwan submitted a fictional case study for publication to the British Journal of Psychiatry. It was based on a character in one of his novels (Enduring Love) who he claimed had De Clerambault’s Syndrome (this was a condition involving a delusional belief that a famous person is in love with the patient and it can lead to stalking).

This found that McEwan’s fictional article was not accepted for publication. This may suggest that psychiatrists are now more suspicious of ‘pseudopatients’. This refuted Rosenhan because the British Journal of Psychiatry editors clearly rejected the fictional case, suggesting psychiatrist’s have learned from Rosenhan’s study. A weakness is that this wasn’t really a field study but like Rosenhan’s study there was an attempt to find out whether psychiatrists were able to distinguish between ‘case studies’ of real patients and pseudopatients. This is a weakness because the psychiatrist hadn’t been able to meet the