Reviewer's report

**Title:** Chronic pain among homeless persons: characteristics, treatment, and barriers to management

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 11 June 2011

**Reviewer:** Beverly Collett

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a well conducted study that investigates pain amongst homeless people and looks at characteristics of the person, treatment and barriers to management. I am not aware of a previously published study on this topic.

Major compulsory revisions:
None

Minor revisions:
Why were the 10 patients who had chronic pain not enrolled in the study? Please give details of these.

What do you mean by single? Does this also mean divorced, widowed and separated?

What were the exclusion criteria in terms of age?

Discretionary Revisions:

I was interested in the gender break down and this may be a suitable area for study / sub-analysis in the future i.e. whether there are any differences between homeless men and women in any characteristics. Although percentage of women and men in the study are mentioned, you have not stated what was the percentage of women and men as a percentage of the whole group studied. Normally women have more pain complaints than men and it would be interesting to know if this was true in your sample --plus, any difference in medication, recreational drug and alcohol use.

Physician survey

I was impressed by the number of physicians that participated in this survey, even though it covered only 40% of individuals. Are there physicians who specialize in medical care for homeless, so some physicians would have been the physician for more than one patient and also more aware of problems of the homeless?

Discussion.

I think that more could have been made of the fact that one-third of the physicians were not aware the their patient’s pain and that not all of them were treating it. I thought that this was most interesting and begs the question as to
why did they not know. Perhaps no interest in this, or not raised by patient or did not want to enter discussion about pain, so avoided being aware.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests