Reviewer's report

Title: Reasons for illicit drug use in people with schizophrenia: Qualitative study

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Reviewer: Jakob Demant

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Reasons for illicit drug use in people with schizophrenia: qualitative study.

This paper asks the very interesting question: is there reasons for drug use in schizophrenia that is missed by the standardized quantitative methods? The paper sets out to do a more open-ended research that intend to explore this. This is a both central as well as interesting research agenda. The research is based on narrative qualitative interviews and uses Grounded Theory in the analytical process.

I will, as a qualitative Sociologist in drug and alcohol research, not deal with the topic of schizophrenia but focus on the method.

1) Page 3. It is in no way unique to Grounded theory to work with a methodological openness where interview themes are altered during the research process. But it is very well described. Just be sure not to pin this point top this specific form of qualitative research. Most qualitative research is done with an openness towards the findings that is research during the process.

2) Page 4. The methodological perspectives for a study based on narrative interviews are somehow unclear. “Reasons” and “experiences” relates well to a qualitative hermeneutic methodology. This is however very contradictory to the aim to “test” the usefulness of qualitative methods. It might be that the authors do not meant to “test”. If the authors mean to “test” QR in this area, they must imply a more widespread positivistic approach. This would however not be in line with the use of narrative interviews. Please modify the “texting” and maybe even down-tone the second questing. It is somehow self evident that qualitative research should be well suited for the task of findings reasons (meaning) for drug-use.

3) Page 5. “Participants were people for two socially deprived areas....” This is central information. Some of the characteristics of “meanings of drug use” described in this paper is very much similar to drug-use among non-schizophrenic people. It is very central that the authors reflect on the context of their data. E.g. living lives where children grow up seeing their parents and peers smoke cannabis and take other drugs. This is a central social context.

4) Page 6. Interview guide. It is a little unclear how guided the interviews were. Narrative interviews are in its optimal form very open and start out with a single questing that the interviewee starts to talk about. The interview guide starts out with a life-story approach (in line with narrative interview styles) but seems to shift to a more self-reflexive form after the question of “what has life been like”.

5) How long time did the interviews take? Was the interview guided by the participants? Some more details on the interviews would be welcome.

6) Page 8. The title “Drug use as a hobby” is somehow misleading. We learn that some participants have a drug lifestyle that is very central to their identity. This seems conflicting to a description of a “hobby”.

7) Page 9. Giving access to a peers group. In this section of the paper we learn that drug use is not only giving access to a peer group but also that the peers group are making some kind of positive (risk control) and negative (peer pressure to take drugs) social controls. This could be elaborated further.

8) Page 13 ff. From this part of the paper the analysis becomes more a more focused on the numbers of participants that have certain beliefs. These numbers must be secondary in any qualitative research. It is the content and the context of the content that is central.

9) Through all the paper it is often difficult to know what kind of drugs that is discussed related to the participants statements. This is vital to make clearer.

10) Gender, age and ethnicity should be marked with each quote.

11) A last general comment. The paper is very interesting and brings forward new insights. However, I miss some more detailed qualitative analysis of the interview statements and especially some reflections of the social contexts of the participants. This is especially true for the last part of the analysis.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests' below