Reviewer's report

Title: Predictors of Premature Mortality in Swedish Drug Abusers: A Prospective Longitudinal Study 1970 - 2006

Version: 3 Date: 24 November 2010

Reviewer: Fabrizio Schifano

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes it is
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes, but a better description of the comparator sample is needed
3. Are the data sound? Yes they seem to be
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Overall, yes (pls see below for further comments)
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? A few more updated references are needed
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? yes
9. Is the writing acceptable? Some editing is clearly needed

More in particular; the paper is interesting and presents with a number of strengths. However, some revision may be needed to improve even further the quality of the document.

Editing: it is baseline and not base-line; page 1 is interpretation and not interpretation etc etc (I am not identifying here all the areas that need to be addressed)

Abstract: I would avoid the term ‘angoris’ (only very few readers would be able to understand this)

Page 3; apart from reference 13, pls include more recent data re: cocaine and amphetamine mortality. The very recent EMCDDA report contains some of these data but there are specific research publications as well from the last 1-2 years

Page 7, line 1: I think that Degenhardt is reference 13 and not 24

Page 8, middle of the page; pls explain better which are the levels of ethnic diversity in Sweden at present

Page 9, after ‘insert table 1 here’: pls describe better the sample of the case
finding study. Furthermore, the following statement is either somewhat unclear or needs some editing (is it 8% vs 23% or the 23% vs 8%?)

Page 10, first line: the ‘persona pathologica’ term may be intelligible to only few professionals

Mortality rates, page 10; did you mean people who had died in 2006 or by 2006?

A few lines below, same page: you already commented about the k=0.98 level of inter-rater reliability

Page 11: Gender and age paragraph: pls check the editing of this paragraph

Page 12, drug type/drug abuse paragraph: pls edit; it is somewhat unclear

Page 13: you mention that stimulant misuse was not associated with any impact on premature mortality, but you failed to comment about this issue (which is quite important and somewhat unexpected) in the discussion

Page 13: ‘..inexperience might also contribute to the hazards..’: no reference given here; no evidence provided here for this statement; better to be deleted

Page 14; negative association between THC misuse and premature mortality occurrence: Pls expand on this important issue. Explanations here provided seem to be over simplistic

Page 14: barbiturates and opiates (with no capital words) causing respiratory depression: no reference provided to support this statement

In short: the paper is worthy publishing, but only after a revision.