Reviewer’s report

Title: Quality of life, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation among men who inject drugs in Delhi, India

Version: 2 Date: 24 March 2013

Reviewer: Jess Fiedorowicz

Reviewer’s report:

Despite a straightforward review, the authors were limited in their responsiveness, dismissing several concerns from both Reviewers, including simple requests for clarification in the manuscript. I’ll accept the authors decision to defer inclusion of Research Question 3 though believe that in seeking the least publishable unit, they have produced a manuscript of more limited interest that can subsequently be condensed, particularly in discussion of the findings. In the absence of inclusion of Research Question 3 (psychosocial factors associated with depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation) much of the discussion extends beyond their defined focus of the manuscript often into the domain of Research Question 3. Questions posed by the Reviewers are for clarification to the reader, who may or may not be familiar with specific methods, in the manuscript itself.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Minor Essential Revisions:

1) Methods, Symptoms of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, paragraph 1: Please change “yields scores of 5, 10, 15, and 20, which represent valid thresholds” to “scores of 5, 10, 15, and 20, represent thresholds.” The current writing might suggest to one not familiar with the PHQ-9 that the scores are of these values rather than the range of 0-27. It would be helpful to also report the range of scores for both PHQ-9 and GAD-7.

2) Results, Quality of Life and defining socio-economic characteristics, paragraph 3: Please delete the phrase “demonstrating the illegality and precariousness of their lives.”

3) It is unusual for ratings of depressive and anxiety symptoms to be normally distributed rather than right skewed and perhaps this is the result of the high prevalence of such symptoms in this sample. If the authors are not able to report measures to describe the distribution incorporating sample weights, then please make brief mention so that the reader can appreciate that the mean is a reasonable measure of central tendency.

4) Statistical analysis: Please report the versions of SPSS and STATA used and cite the software used accordingly. SPSS is not an ideal system for data entry and the lack of double entry of data can be acknowledged as a limitation. In addition to citing references for TLS sampling, some mention of specific guidelines applied should be included, particularly since one of the references may not be readily acceptable for all readers. The method for computation of
sampling weight can be reported. The authors describe each sampling event (combination of time and location) as a cluster. Were samplings at different times but the same location treated as separate clusters or were hierarchical clusters used?

5) It seems unusual that all 420 participants completed the 30 minute interview and lends some concern for the possibility of coercion or the consent process not informing participants they are free to end participation at any time. Were participants paid for participation in the survey? If so, how much were they paid for participation? Please report. Presumably a rationale was provided to the IRB to waive written informed consent. Brief mention of the rationale (presume this is because of literacy rate) for this seems indicated.

6) Discussion, Low Quality of Life and Socio-economic Status, paragraph 2: This paragraph should be deleted as it appear more related to psychosocial factors associated with depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, which is planned for subsequent manuscript.

7) Discussion, Implications for programmes seeking to integrate a focus on mental health, paragraph 2: The list at the close of the paragraph includes a clause surrounding a noun and two sentences. To maintain consistency of list format, please change to all sentences or an item list.

8) Discussion, Implications for programmes seeking to integrate a focus on mental health, paragraph 3: This paragraph extends beyond the focus of the manuscript as well and should be deleted.

9) Discussion, Implications for programmes seeking to integrate a focus on mental health, paragraph 5: This contrast between a biomedical approach and an approach to more broadly address social determinants was previously highlighted and this paragraph can subsequently be deleted although the last sentence on structural interventions might fit nicely at the end of paragraph 4.

10) The final sentence of the conclusion remains in place and extends beyond what can actually be derived from this data.

Discretionary Revisions:

1) Results, Demographics and substance use, paragraph 2: Please be more accurate when simplifying results to fractions. Please change to “just over one-third (38%)” and “Just over half (53%)” and “nearly one-quarter.”

2) Results, Demographics and substance use, paragraph 2: Spasmoproxyvon is capitalized mid-sentence.

3) Please clarify what is meant by “class 12” is this equivalent to grade 12 or 12 years of primary/secondary education?

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