Reviewer's report

Title: Time-course of cannabis withdrawal symptoms in poly-substance abusers

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Reviewer: Nicholas Horton

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Time course of cannabis withdrawal symptoms in poly-substance abusers

The authors report on a cohort of subjects withdrawing from cannabis during detoxification, and provide some credence to the existence of withdrawal symptoms. This paper has a number of minor limitations that detract from the current presentation. It would be relatively straightforward the suggestions made below. A revised manuscript would be of widespread interest to those in the cannabis abuse field.

Major compulsory revisions:

1) Would a graphical presentation of the results in Table 1 be more comprehensible? At present it is difficult to see patterns. The paper by Gelman et al (Let's practice what we preach: turning tables into graphs, 2002, The American Statistician 56:121-130) provides several similar examples.

2) Minimal information is provided regarding the psychometric properties of the DSM-IV cannabis withdrawal scale. In addition, this scale should be referenced. Does this decompose into a reasonable factor structure?

3) The manuscript would benefit from a clearer analytic flow (in the introduction, with list of goals) and a parallel structure in the methods (how these will be assessed) and results. This will help to guide the reader through what at present is a somewhat convoluted path.

4) How were non-responses to questions handled in the analysis process, if any?

5) Section 1.2.2 second paragraph is the pharmacological treatment measure that the authors created? More information is needed.

6) There's some ambiguity regarding which variables included in table 3 are included in the models in table 4? Can the Notes provide additional detail regarding the "Additional substances" column?

7) While the authors are to be commended for a clear and comprehensive discussion of limitations, it should also be added that multiplicity are a potential issue here, as the number of tests run and reported are considerably larger than the sample size.

Discretionary comments:

1) Section 1.1.1 second sentence consider splitting sentence after “… [2]”. 
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.