Reviewer's report

Title: Assessing the prevalence of non-medical prescription opioid use in the Canadian general adult population: evidence of large variation depending on survey questions used

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Reviewer: Janne Tolstrup

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In this paper, the authors wish to investigate if two measures of non-medical prescription opioid use (NMPOU) in questionnaires is predicting a large difference in the prevalence obtain by two different questionnaires. In my opinion, this aim is relevant and hence the paper brings important knowledge.

My comments to the paper are quite specific: the paper is a quite hard to read! I would suggest to make the paper more reader-friendly.

For instance, the results in the abstract reads: “Results: The 2008+2009 (1.92% [95%CI: 1.28%-2.53%]) and 2010 (6.54% [95%CI: 4.90%-8.18%]) NMPOU items resulted in significantly different estimates (p<0.001). This difference was also found when stratifying our analysis by sex (p<0.001).”

Very hard to understand without reading into the paper! A specific aim is not given in the abstract either.

A lot of abbreviations are used (PO, NMPOU, CADUMS, NSDUH,CM, CATI, CAMH,OSDUHS), which makes the text difficult to read fluently. I would suggest not to use abbreviations unless it is used many times in the text. Further, abbreviations should be consistent (why is there a ‘U’ in NMPOU and not in PO?).

What are exactly non-medical prescription opioids? (Introduction).

The specific wording of the questionnaires does not have to be included in the introduction.

Analysis and discussion are relevant.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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