Reviewer's report

Title: Treatment for illegal drug use disorders: the role of comorbid mood and anxiety disorders.

Version: 3 Date: 3 January 2014

Reviewer: Patrick McCabe

Reviewer's report:

Please address the following:

1) Table 1 is still a problem. Table 1 should summarize the two main populations (maybe as two tables?) 1) those with an illegal substance use disorder (by treatment or not, with counts, %, p-value) 2) Untreated population (by perceived unmet need or not, with counts, %, p-value). In its current form Table 1 mistakenly reinforces the perception that the perceived need for treatment analytical cohort (n=764) is the same as the total cohort (n=1114). The title of Table 1 even states that the “p-value (is) comparing the three treatment groups”. This is misleading as there are individuals that are both using health services AND endorsing a perceived unmet need for treatment in the Table 1 cohort (n=1114). There are two separate but overlapping cohorts here and they are conflated in Table 1. Please recognize and acknowledge this. Please emphasis this in the text. (Major Compulsory Revisions)

Again I recommend just looking at those with a substance use disorder that did not receive services, assess perceived unmet needs in this population (n=764). This paper will be better if is more narrowly focused and more easily understood.

2) In the abstract add the following or similar language to specify aims: “Our aim was to examine whether comorbid mood and anxiety disorders influence patterns of treatment or the perceived unmet need for treatment among those not receiving treatment for illegal drug use disorders.” (Minor Essential Revisions)

3) In abstract methods add the following or similar language or some description of what the analysis was: “Odds of treatment and odds of perceived unmet need for treatment were assessed using logistic regression, adjusting for socio-demographic characteristics, treatment for mood and anxiety disorders, and comorbid alcohol use disorder. (Minor Essential Revisions)

4) Add the following or similar language to your outcomes section: “Study outcomes We examined two study outcomes: treatment for illegal drug use disorders among all those with an illegal drug use disorder and perceived unmet need for treatment among those having not received treatment.” (Minor Essential Revisions)

5) Limitations and strengths

“particularly as reporting of substance use disorders appears to be precise”

Another survey finding similar prevalence estimates does not constitute evidence
that the NESARC prevalence estimates are exact or accurate (precise) but evidence of consistency (reliability), please remove 'precise' from the manuscript. (Minor Essential Revisions)

6) “Moreover, the reliability and validity of the AUDADIS have previously been verified and described [31].” This reference only supports the reliability claim, please revise. (Minor Essential Revisions)

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.