Reviewer’s report

Title: Influence of Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Need on Treatment Utilization for Substance Use and Mental Disorders: Findings from a Population-Based Survey in California

Version: 2 Date: 29 April 2009

Reviewer: Birgitte Thylstrup

Reviewer’s report:

The article focuses on an interesting and important area within treatment seeking among individuals with mental health and substance use disorders. The article has a clear research focus, is well written and adhere to standards for conducting, reporting and discussing research. Thus there are no major revisions in the article, and it is recommended for publication. However, it is recommended that the authors make some minor essential as well as discretionary revisions.

Major Compulsory Revisions

None

Minor Essential Revisions

The article should be rewritten for language and checked for spelling mistakes. Although not many, there are a few spelling errors and need for improvement of some of the sentences.

Page 11. It is recommended to include standard deviation (SD) when reporting the mean of the participants age.

Page 13. It is recommended to explain the enabling characteristics in more details, especially the measure of social support appears rather limited. Why is there not any references to research instruments in this paragraph?

Discretionary Revisions

The authors often base their arguments on quite a few references, e.g. second paragraph, p. 4 starting with "Other studies have..." and second paragraph, p.5 starting with "Similar findings.....", and p.16 in the second sentence in the discussion "As others (studies?)"... with some references. In general it is recommended that the authors include more references when they present hypotheses or research findings.

It is recommended not to use abbreviations in the abstract (AOD and MH under results).

Page 7. It would be interesting if the authors went into more details when referring to the "stress and vulnerability" model or the minority stress model in the
discussion of psychological distress.

Considering the gender focus in the article, it would be interesting to present data on the balance of gender in the information given on race, age, employment, health insurance, education etc.

Page 12. The authors both refer to DSM-IV criteria for AOD and DSM-III-R for mental disorders. It is recommended that the authors comment on possible differences in the two diagnostical manuals, e.g. whether the assessment of SUD by using DSM-III-R would change the balance between AOD and MH in the sample.

Page 15, second paragraph. A more detailed description of lack of significant differences in enabling characteristics is preferred.

Page 16 in the discussion. Is it possible that the underutilization of care among African Americans and Hispanics is related religion besides the reported stigmatization from families and communities?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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