Reviewer's report

Title: Surviving crack: strategies developed by Brazilian users to deal with the risks associated with the drug, a qualitative study.

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Reviewer: Karla Wagner

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Surviving crack: strategies developed by Brazilian users to deal with the risks associated with the drug: a qualitative study

This manuscript describes findings from a qualitative study of Brazilian crack users, focusing on users’ perceptions of the risks involved with crack smoking and their strategies for managing the associated risks. It nicely describes the resilience and protective strategies of a group of long-term crack users, providing an alternate perspective to the more “risk” focused literature.

A few suggestions for minor essential revisions of the manuscript follow:

1. Recommend using “infection” rather than “contamination” when talking about HIV infection throughout the manuscript

2. In the methods section, the paragraph “The sample was intentionally and selected by criteria [19]…” is unclear and needs more explanation.

3. In the discussion section the sentence “Although there are some negative reports regarding the outcome of the association, it seems that the ‘benefits…’ have been verified” is a bit strongly worded based on findings from this sample of 28 individuals.

Suggestions for discretionary revisions:

4. In the results section, “(2) Organic Risks” – the risks included in this category in addition to overdose risk are unclear. If there are additional factors that were discussed, suggest including reference to them. If overdose risk is the primary factor in this category, suggest changing this category to “overdose risk”.

5. In results section, “Complying with trafficking rules” – it is initially slightly unclear that the “trafficking rules” refer to rules regulating behavior between drug dealers and consumers. While it becomes clear upon continued reading, it could be clarified at the initial reference. I think the confusion stems from the use of “trafficking” in the US to refer to more macro-level aspects of the drug economy (e.g., trafficking routes for drugs traveling between countries).

6. The authors could spend a little more time in the discussion/conclusion describing the implications of their findings in terms of developing individual or structural interventions, or the potential to involve users in the design of services
or policies that would assist drug users in minimizing the harms associated with use.

**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.