Reviewer's report

Title: Drug problems among homeless individuals in Toronto, Canada: Prevalence, drugs of choice, and relation to health status.

Version: 1 Date: 14 December 2009

Reviewer: Tracey Koehlmoos

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- Minor Essential Revisions

Over all, a clear, well written piece from Grinman and colleagues. Nothing too edgy here, just the facts—especially in light of the Khandor work from 2007.

1. Please state that the study is part of a larger study of the homeless in Toronto earlier on than in the methodology section. I think this is important because it creates the limitation of excluding the homeless who are not registered for the health insurance scheme. (I find this a major limitation especially as it was 18% of potential respondents.)

2. In the Discussion, please describe the other studies in the opening para at least the author and the year so that the reader can clearly see the value of the comparison being made rather than having to flip to the references—particularly for the first sentence.

3. Are the results from the SF-12 presented in a table? Although the research team is familiar with the SF-12, the reader may very well not be—and the table with results and questions from the SF-12 should be marked clearly.

4. In the results, the sentence “among individuals with drug problems in the last 30 days, 27% identified drug and/or alcohol use as a factor keeping them from getting out of homelessness, compared to 5% among those without a drug use problem” Is this really a meaningful sentence? Consider rephrasing this presentation of results.

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.