Reviewer's report

Title: Spatial Distribution and Characteristics of Injecting Drug Users (IDU) in Five Northeastern States of India

Version: 2 Date: 18 June 2010

Reviewer: Danielle Ompad

Reviewer's report:

BMC
Re-review

Manuscript title: Spatial distribution and characteristics of locations of injecting drug users (IDUs) in five Northeastern States of India
Manuscript ID: 1525320843477823

Comments

Provided is a paper describing a study aimed at mapping locations where IDUs inject drugs in five Indian states, as well as describing the characteristics of IDUs at those sites. Compared to the initial submission, this manuscript provides a considerable amount of detail regarding the study design and findings and is very much improved. Further, the addition of the map will help the international reader understand where the research was conducted.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. In the abstract and throughout the manuscript, there is reference to “the interventional program.” It is unclear if the authors are trying to evaluate a particular intervention or if they are referring to interventions in general. Please be more specific.
2. There is reference to illicit sexual activities. What exactly do you mean here?
3. Were any key informants IDUs?
4. Have older IDUs been injecting longer? It could be that older IDUs started around the same calendar time as the younger IDUs. In other words could the older IDUs be recent initiates or do they have longer drug using careers?
5. I am unclear on the in-depth interviews.
   a. I think of in-depth interviews as being a qualitative interview, it seems as though the interview was both quantitative and qualitative. If qualitative, the sample sizes are a lot larger than is typically seen in such studies.
   b. You write about developing a friendship with drug users. Such a recruitment approach seems potentially coercive. Did you mean that the field teams developed rapport with the IDUs?
   c. How long were the interviews?
d. How were the codes developed for the in-depth interviews?

e. Please provide a bit more description of the manual analysis.

6. Need a table describing the demographics of those that participated in the in-depth interviews.

Minor Essential Revisions

7. While generally well written, some help will still be needed with English grammar and spelling.

8. Acronyms need to be defined in the text the first time they are used.

9. Need a reference for the sentinel surveillance if available.

10. Need to define a “godown” and “ritual places” (p. 14) for the non-Indian reader.

Discretionary Revisions

**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 have no conflicts related to this manuscript.