Reviewer's report

Title: Pain as a Global Public Health Priority

Version: 1 Date: 11 August 2011

Reviewer: Joanna McParland

Reviewer's report:

This paper reports a debate that argues for the need for public health researchers to consider chronic pain as a global public health problem. It is argued that pain needs to be considered from multiple perspectives, including the public health perspective, in order to be effectively treated. The paper is generally well-written and is a topical issue that is often omitted from Government policy documents.

The content of the paper isn’t entirely new. There is some chronic pain literature arguing for chronic pain to be considered a public health problem. However, I believe this paper adds to existing literature, addressing the global problem of chronic pain, bringing this to a potentially new and relevant audience and creating some compelling and logical arguments in favour of chronic pain as a public health problem. I make the following suggestions for revision.

Major essential revisions

(1) An important basis of the argument is that various social factors can influence health. However, only brief mention is given to what they are. I suggest that the review would be significantly enhanced with some demonstration of social factors that can affect the experience of chronic pain. There are increasing numbers of empirical papers considering this issue in chronic pain. Recent papers include Rios and Zautra (2010) and Dorner et al (2011). The biospsychosocial model of pain may also be referenced to provide a context for this.

(2) Paragraph 2 of the “Discussion” section of the paper addresses literature considering the prevalence of pain. I suggest that this section is overly long and could be shortened to reflect key points. I also suggest that in addition to prevalence the severity of pain is given due consideration, along with factors such as accompanying disability to help to highlight the extent of the problem of chronic pain in society.

(3) I suggest that the paper could provide some direction for change i.e. consider what research could do to address the burden of chronic pain from a public health perspective.

Minor essential revisions

(1) In the “Summary” section, line 8, the letter ‘s’ should be added to the word ‘disease’.

(2) The word ‘priority’ should also be added after ‘public health’ at the end of paragraph 2 in the ‘A Public Health Approach to Pain’ section.
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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.