Reviewer's report

Title: Understanding drug-related mortality in released prisoners: A national review of coronial records

Version: 1 Date: 7 September 2011

Reviewer: kate dolan

Reviewer's report:

Major revision

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Could be improved, the key definition is missing

3. Are the data sound?
   It is impossible to tell

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Not really

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   No

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   No

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   No

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   No

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Almost
   Major problems
What is the definition for these individuals to be considered ex-prisoners? The methods mentions ‘held in care or custody immediately before they died. Is this hours? days or weeks? It is a crucial definition that needs elaboration.

Why are police cells excluded but home detention included? I would have thought the opposite to be more appropriate.

Minor problems
misuse of the word incidence p 2

Introduction First line studies in Australia and elsewhere – but all references are for Australia.

What is an open case?
P4 “Previous incarceration episode is this ever? Or not before 2000? P5 majority was not were

The way 3.2 is written means that the cases were less likely to be married and born in Australia as it follows on from were less likely to be indigenous. Is that what the authors mean?

3.4
What does benzodiazepines were implicated mean? They were present? They played a role?
P 7 why are home environments beyond the reach of emergency services??

Facilitate access to a safer injecting facility - is that longer hours or more centres?

How many deaths occurred in each state? and in each year??

what about reducing the prison population? Wouldn’t that help reduce the post release mortality?

What about the connections? And Passports projects??
is this the first study to use the national coronial data base??

Was there any mention of reduce tolerance in the files? Presumably they was testing carried out?

**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: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests