Reviewer's report

Title: Ending homelessness among people with mental illness: The At Home/Chez Soi randomized trial of a Housing First intervention in Toronto.

Version: 1 Date: 12 March 2012

Reviewer: dyanne semogas

Reviewer's report:

Questions & Reviewer’s Comments
1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? No.
   a) Target population inclusion criteria and definitions are sound and meets target population example-absolute homelessness. But authors do not define mental illness: does it include conduct disorders, axis II: personality disorders? Is it any mental illness for inclusion?
   b) Use of MINI is a large part of the protocol. The authors don’t tell us anything about the MINI: is it structured versus semi-structured, what’s its reliability and validity? what are its limitations?

3. Are the data sound? Yes.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? No.
   a) “Randomization was successful in balancing the characteristics”. Described a recruitment strategy but did not outline what the criteria are for a successful recruitment strategy “balance” between intervention and control. In other words: what’s the criteria for “balance”?

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? No.
   a) Needs to be expanded. Barriers experienced are important to state as much as strategies for success.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? No.
   a) Authors reference other studies that have done this intervention. Does not address what gaps these other studies have identified other than “it’s not Canadian”.
   b) Why is Toronto of interest? 4 sites identified: can you generalize from Toronto
to other parts of the world?

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes.

9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes.

Strengths:

A particular strength of this manuscript is the inclusion of community stakeholders and consumers in the research process.

**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.