Reviewer's report

Title: Smoking, mental illness and socioeconomic disadvantage: Analysis of the Australian National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing

Version: 2 Date: 23 January 2013

Reviewer: Elena Ratschen

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper that is concerned with an important and timely subject. While I recognise the overall value of the work (particularly the conclusion), I struggle to come to terms with some aspects presented, see below:

Major compulsory revisions
To my knowledge, the independent association between smoking and mental illness is very well established and has been increasingly explored from neurobiological, psychosocial and genetic perspectives. I have problems to understand the rationale presented for the analyses at hand, seeing as I am not sure the work adds much to existing knowledge (but is presented as such). Ziedonis et al. in particular have published several papers/reviews to explore the usually bidirectional causal links between smoking and various mental illnesses. Looking at the reference list of this paper, it strikes me that many of the authors and seminal pieces of work in the area of smoking/mental illness appear to be absent.

The authors don't justify the exclusion of the more severe mental illnesses (schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression) and categorise the common disorders wrongly: 'anxiety, affective disorders, and substance abuse disorders' -- anxiety is an affective disorder itself.

It is well known that the smoking prevalence among homeless people, prisoners etc. is excessive, and that comorbidity with mental illness is high in these populations.

I am in no position to comment on the statistic methods used but find that the methods section is not written in a way to support understanding. I don't understand the section on weighting.

The results section is at times hard to read, as long sequences of similarly structured sentences describing associations found don't always convey a lot of meaning.

The methods section could probably be restructured, seeing as in some cases, the headings have as many words as the section associated with it.

The discussion is comprehensive but extremely long and very much focussed on
Australia and Australian examples of research in the area.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.