Reviewer's report

Title: A Public Health Response to the Methamphetamine Epidemic: The Implementation of Contingency Management to Treat Methamphetamine Dependence

Version: 1 Date: 30 June 2006

Reviewer: Ron Stall

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an interesting process evaluation for an innovative "low impact" treatment for MSM methamphetamine users. As such, it reports a possible approach to manage the methamphetamine epidemic among gay men in large urban centers. This should not be confused as an RCT trial, nor is it presented as such.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The paper is very well written: I have only one correction to suggest, regarding the use of the word "causal" regarding the association between meth and high risk sex/HIV seroconversion. Although much of the data on this association meets the requirements for causal interpretations, a causal link between meth and these outcomes has not (strictly speaking) been established. That would take a double-blind RCT design, which is clearly unethical to field. Just say that these behaviors are linked.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

I was surprised that in the Discussion the authors didn't point out that this project served an extraordinarily high risk group of HIV seropositive men. To the extent that CM and other substance abuse treatments lowered meth use and helped these men organize their lives a bit better, rates of high risk sex within this group might have been lowered. If so, the CM approach used here would had additional benefit in terms of addressing the conjoined HIV/meth epidemic. The authors might want to add this point to the Discussion.

Similarly, I was surprised that the authors didn't outline a short research/public health practice agenda to move the field of CM approaches to the meth epidemic forward. Again, this short text could be added to the Discussion section.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.