Reviewer's report

Title: Social integration of patients in long-term maintenance treatment in northern Italy

Version: 2 Date: 6 February 2006

Reviewer: Antonia Domingo-Salvany

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors have gone through all comments pointed out in the previous revision, and the paper has improved quite a bit, but there are still some issues that need consideration. Most of them are related to new information given.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
The authors have three aims but they write them separately (2+1). It would be clearer if they wrote the three together.

Point 6 of my previous comments has not been completely resolved, as a person could for instance be employed part of the six months, while later or before there could be a period of unemployment. How was this handled?

The description of table 4 in the text is flawed. For instance, older subjects were not only at increased risk of hepatitis and TPHA but also HIV. Employment status is also incorrectly described. Furthermore it is not clear whether the authors included all variables in a logistic regression (LR) for each infectious disease or whether they are all different LR (adjusted by age —continuous variable?— and sex).

Discussion, pages 9 and 10: As the authors do not have the information about length of time in treatment, it is not possible to say that patients with higher education went earlier to seek treatment. The same holds for employment.

Page 10, last line: It is not totally correct to say “… as the age increases…” because it gives a sense of continuity and the population was not from a cohort study. The authors are simply referring to the older subjects.

The sentence provided as the correction of former point 9 also has a problem of over-interpretation. To interpret the mean number of children it is important to know for how long subjects have been married and how long they had been in treatment.

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)
What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have not competing interests.