Reviewer's report

Title: Needlestick injuries among dental health care workers in non-hospital settings

Version: 1 Date: 16 June 2006

Reviewer: Mary-Louise McLaws

Reviewer's report:

General
This manuscript on NSI is interesting but requires modifications to clarify for the reader whether the NSI are all associated with used items and the statistical importance of the findings.

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

Introduction
1. reference for HCV leading to chronic hepatitis and cirrhosis.

Methods
2. State whether only those injuries associated with used (potentially contaminated with patient body fluid)items were reported to these two compensation systems. This is important as the hyperdermic injuries associated with anesthetic carpule may have occurred prior to piercing the patient.
3. State that the reporting mechanism (LINIS and MIPS) are the sole reporting mechanisms for dental HCWs in non hospital settings.
4. Did the authors use the terms "sharps" or "sharp" while searching the ANSI source codes? If not why not?
5. For the benefit of readers who have not read reference-12 the authors should briefly state the methods used to identify source patients for HBV and HIV.

Results
6. Perform 95%CI around proportions (Tables 1,2&3).
7. Perform p-value using Chi-square test for trend for NSI between 1995 and 2001 using number of employed dental HCWs for each year (if these data are available although full time equivalent hours would be a better denominator).

Discussion
8. Last paragraph the authors accept the magnitude of NSI "may reflect an underestimation..". Change "may" to "will". Include a brief statement on any work that has examined reporting behavior (any anonymous surveys to dental HCWs on their NSI and reporting behavior in a 12 months period).

What next?: Accept after discretionary 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 no competing interests.