Reviewer's report

**Title:** Risk factors for developing a cutaneous injection-related infection among injection drug users: a cohort study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 16 May 2008

**Reviewer:** Libby Topp

**Reviewer's report:**

This concise, well-written report investigates in a prospective design the factors associated with the development of injection-related infections among the Vancouver SIF cohort. This area is attracting increasing attention, and several Australian papers have been submitted on the issue, including one that was recently published (Aust N Z J Public Health. 2008; 32:34-7). Statistical methods are appropriate, and the authors, who have available to them data collected from a large cohort of high-risk IDU, have certainly made good use of these data by publishing on a broad range of issues. I recommend only minor discretionary revisions as listed below.

Introduction, first paragraph, last sentence: 'the primary reason for why IDU seeks treatment' is awkward and may flow better if changed to 'the primary reason that IDU seek treatment'.

Results: some repetition between the figures cited in the paragraph beginning 'Factors associated with reporting a current CIRI at the univariate ...' and Table 1 - given the ORs make the sentence lengthy and are contained in the table, they need not be listed here also.

Discussion: it would be useful for the authors to consider and discuss the sorts of interventions for which they call to prevent/reduce CIRI development. Although it is clearly stated that interventions are required, for readers who are less familiar with the population, its needs, and the lack of political will to address these chronic issues, such broadly-based and costly interventions as would be required to address unstable housing, for example, warrant some description, along with discussion of funding options, feasibility, other potential benefits etc. I encourage them to think about this population with which they hold such expertise and share the benefits of their long experience to let the audience know, what can we actually do about this? Rather than the standard conclusion of so much IDU research, 'something must be done'.

In the last sentence before the conclusion, 'in this setting' must refer to the SIF, but this was not immediately clear.

The authors note in the Introduction that there are currently no guidelines to inform the reporting of injection-related infections according to severity. Do their data have any implications for this issue?
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