Reviewer’s report

Title: Smoking and its treatment in addiction services: Clients’ and staff behaviour and attitudes

Version: 2 Date: 10 April 2014

Reviewer: Jamie Brown

Reviewer’s report:

This paper reports on an extremely interesting and important issue for public health: there is a widespread failure to deliver smoking cessation interventions to a high prevalence population - clients receiving treatment for substance abuse - despite the majority reporting motivation to quit. There is also data presented to suggest that the prevalence of staff smoking and attitudes may be a contributory factor. The reporting is to a high standard.

I have suggestions only for minor revisions:

The abstract conclusion is not currently a standalone citable statement. I appreciate the word limit is tight but it may be worth re-iterating who the population is within the conclusion of abstract.

On both the abstract and on p.5, I would make explicit what the organisation is that is ‘Europe’s largest provider of mental health care’, and provide more details on its location. On this basis, presumably, it may be more appropriate to frame the paper around England, or even London, than the UK if the sampling was restricted to one setting? As discussed, there is no reason to suppose it would not generalise but I think it useful for this to be explicit.

Given that missing data was treated on an item by item basis, it may be useful to indicate total n available for each variable presented in the tables by either a footnote or by presenting both denominator as well numerator in brackets.

The MTSS was collapsed into 3 levels for analysis and, therefore, I think it would be sensible for it to be presented equivalently in Table 1.

I think it would be helpful to report 95% CIs where prevalence is reported.

As discussed, the rate of occasional smoking is surprisingly high. It would be useful to include the exact wording of the smoking status question in the paper (and indeed all the questions - possibly as an online appendix). For example, we have recently found in the STS that although very low rate smokers (<1 cpd) remains rare in the general population, people who identify themselves as primarily social smokers are relatively very common (although usually still smoking more than 1 cpd). I wonder whether the exact wording of the question can account for some of the differences between the current and general population...
The authors refer to the current smoking rate in the general population being 20% without providing a source. They may be interested in the following recent reference: Brown, J., & West, R. (2014). Smoking prevalence in England is below 20% for the first time in 80 years. BMJ, 348 (feb11 9), g1378. doi:10.1136/bmj.g1378

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest 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:**

JB has received an unrestricted research grant from Pfizer who develop and manufacture smoking cessation aids.

JB has collaborated previously with one of the authors: Prof Ann McNeill.