Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence and associated factors in burnout and psychological morbidity among substance misuse professionals

Version: 1 Date: 31 May 2007

Reviewer: Ilana Belle Crome

Reviewer’s report:

This paper deals with a subject that is often ignored, so it is important.

The following suggestions should be dealt with under Minor Essential Revisions:

Abstract
When was the study undertaken?
Was the questionnaire only mailed once?
Page 2 - Methods - 6th line down - It is not usual to put a reference in an Abstract, i.e. ‘Survey (1)’
Page 3 - 6th line down - Does the term ‘job related factors’ equate to work related stressors, to burnout factors or to both?
Conclusions - Might be worth considering some recommendation and / or future research in light of the findings.

Background
It might be useful to add some references in the first few lines of the first paragraph.
Reference 5 is some 10 years old – would we expect the situation to be better or worse now?
Page 5 - 5th bullet point – Is the word ‘productivity’ appropriate for this group?

Methods
When was the study carried out?
How was the list compiled?
How long did it take to complete?
How many sent responses second time round?
Page 6 - Line 17 – It seems that apart form the variables listed at this point, there are additional ones in the table, i.e. deadlines, staff shortages, work overload, time pressure to complete tasks, centralised decision making, shortage of essential resources, high expectation. It would be helpful to know what exactly constituted ‘job stressors’ and how many there are.
On what basis was it decided to include job stressors if at least two thirds of the sample considered them a problem? Is there a reference for this? Are they the ones described above, i.e. deadlines, staff shortages, work overload, time pressure to complete tasks, centralised decision making, shortage of essential resources, high expectation?

Very early on in the paper is would be useful to clarify what are dependent variables, and what constitutes the job or work related stressors and work profile variables (last line on this page).

Results
Page 7 - Reliability of measures – Please explain how was this determined.
Page 7 - Last paragraph – Perceived job stressors: It is not clear to me how this was calculated.
Page 8 - Should the third paragraph heading be underlined?

Discussion
I would underline that 8 out of 10 respondents suffer from psychological morbidity. This is a startling finding, which should be emphasised. While you might not expect burnout to be as pronounced, still over 50% and 2/5 report this extreme condition and more so than other mental health professionals.

Page 11 - Can you outline any other relevant limitations e.g. response rate? Can you suggest any next steps? What detailed recommendations do you have for service providers, managers and commissioners?
What explanation(s) may lie behind the findings?

Page 12 - 3rd line down – Consider replacing ‘productivity’ – satisfaction, retention, improved patient outcomes?

Page 19 - ICC – Write in full

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'