Reviewer’s report

Title: Methamphetamine use and correlates in two villages of the highland ethnic Karen minority in northern Thailand: a cross sectional study

Version: 2  Date: 22 January 2009

Reviewer: Mary-Lynn Brecht

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well-organized and presented manuscript, providing information on an understudied methamphetamine-using population. The methods appear appropriate. Results identify a population with particularly high methamphetamine use compared to the nation as a whole. I would suggest only a few clarifications that might facilitate the interpretation of results:

1. p.2, last line For what year was the 0.4% meth-dependent survey result? And this seems inconsistent with the 0.2% from 2003 having used meth in the past year. Usually, dependence is a smaller rate than is past year use. Can you clarify?

2. p. 3, lines 5-6 In what year were the 10.3% and 29% results compiled?

3. p.4, last paragraph The data collection procedure is described as occurring on 2 days, with interviews conducted by 3 interviewers in each of 2 villages. It’s not clear how this could have produced 548 interviews—that seems to work out to an average of 45 interviews per interviewer per day—is this correct?

4. p. 7, line 4 “…was used by 15% of male residents of two separate Karen villages.” Table 1 indicates a rate of 19.5% in Village A and 15% in Village B. Please clarify.

5. p.7, paragraph 2, 6-10 This explanation is not clear (impact of earlier opium use).

6. Discussion Do you have any information that might relate to whether the relationship of meth to work in town is influenced mainly from “exposure” to meth or perhaps by a perceived need for meth use for “functional” purposes (e.g. to work more hours or two jobs)?

7. Discussion Are there any suggestions as to why this population has considerably higher meth use than other national surveys have found? The predictors found in the study don’t seem to be different from what might be found in the general Thai population. Is it that prevention efforts have reached the general population but not these ethnic villages? Other possibilities?

7. References #2 Is this reference from Thailand?
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.