Reviewer’s report

Title: The health conditions of inmates in Italy

Version: 0 Date: 17 Aug 2016

Reviewer: Gary Christopher

Reviewer's report:

ABSTRACT

There are a number of issues with phrasing in this section. I have highlighted a couple, but there are more. Just check through once more to ensure clarity of expression.

p3 ln4 >>> Should read, "The aim of this study…"

p3 ln7 >>> The sentence, "describe the features of the population in Italian prisons and their health, focusing on internal diseases," does not really make sense. It is the health of the inmates you are interested in, not the health of the prison. Just be careful with phrasing.

p3 ln14 >>> Why present percentage of males here?

BACKGROUND

As a general point, and as with the previous section, there are grammatical issues to address in order to ensure clarity of expression.

p4 ln4 >>> You mention prisoners are "mostly as pretrial detainees/remand prisoners or as sentenced prisoners." What other types are there?

p4 ln51 >>> This paragraph could be written with a little more clarity. What exactly are you saying here?

p5 ln 9 >> > Should that be a lack of "microclimate and light"?

p5 ln17 >>> Again, there are sections here that are a little difficult to follow. Needs some rewording.

p5 ln46 >>> Should that be CDC? If not, use Italian with acronym with English translation in brackets. Do the same for other similar instances in the document.
There needed to be a bigger section on what you actually planned to do. What were your research questions/hypotheses? What were your predictions? Just a little elaboration needed really.

METHODS

p6 ln22 >>> Rather than, "internal and psychiatric," it might be clearer to state, "general medical health and mental health/psychiatric."

You mention "missing data were deleted for the analysis." You need to be specific. Was data for a complete record (person) deleted if some of it was missing, or are you referring to merely specific measures? You need to be clear about communicating the protocol you adopted for the analysis and indicate just what happened to missing or incomplete data-sets.

RESULTS

p7 ln42 >>> You do not need to repeat the percentage of males.

p7 ln47 >>> Replace "foreigners" with something like "from other EU/non-EU countries."

p7 ln55 >>> It is conventional to refer to participants rather than subjects in some disciplines. Not sure if that is the case here.

p7 ln59 >>> Not clear why total number of diagnoses is reported. What does that add?

p8 ln5 >>> You have changed from using full-stops to commas to designate the decimal point in percentages.

DISCUSSION

The opening paragraph needs to be a lot clearer and specific. What exactly are the implications and how issues likely to be addressed?

As it stands, this section reads rather like a list. There needs to be more overt structure here that leads the reader through your findings within the appropriate context.

CONCLUSION

Why start with limitations? Would this not be better suited in the Discussion?
There needs to be more here. This should be punchier. You need to really spell out the implications and what the next step might be.

GENERAL

Although I have made specific comments in some sections about grammar and general clarity, there are instances throughout the document. It is, therefore, worthwhile just reading through purely to tease out any instances where grammatical issues needs to be addressed or additional context needs to be added to ensure the reader follows your argument.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal