Reviewer’s report

Title: “They’re always there”: Resident Experiences of Living with Rats in a Disadvantaged Urban Neighbourhood

Version: 0 Date: 08 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Louise Lawson

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting paper about rats, but it lacks analytical rigour. It has the potential for improvement. The focus on health as a key objective of the article must be much stronger.

The paper would benefit from an introduction stating what it aims to do. The background is largely about health, yet there is no statement of research questions (no mention of health?) - apart from explaining that this is an exploratory study to elicit and describe the experiences of residents with rats. You state that you do not want to build a theory to explain experiences - why not as this would strengthen the paper? The focus on health needs to be made explicit e.g. considering the pathways to health (mental health, physical, community health, social justice, different dimensions of health etc) as a way of framing the findings and discussion.

Homelessness, deprivation and drug use are important contextual features and you recruited participants from the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users - was the focus therefore specifically on drug users, as this is not particularly clear. If so, it would be helpful to consider the context more and why this is important/unique.

Methodology reads like it is taken from a text book - would be useful to see what the concept maps or composite map looks like.

You provide little information about the characteristics of the research participants e.g.- material circumstances; working/not working; drug users or not; household characteristics; children etc (a table might be helpful). Occasionally you reference the view of a homeless person, woman or child, but it is not consistent. You should bring out the differences/similarities based on sample characteristics.

You have five themes - some of these could be background factors (very descriptive), and there could be a stronger focus on the health aspects (e.g. mapping pathways) and what the implications are of this in relation to other environmental hazards and issues. Other issues are not detailed in the findings e.g. (p30). Very briefly you mention other pests such as cockroaches and bedbugs, then lack of affordable housing, opioid crisis, police harassment etc but in a scant way. There are too many quotes and not enough analysis. The discussion is interesting and well-written but does not build very much on the findings.

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.

Unable to assess

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

No

**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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

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