Reviewer’s report

Title: Substance use and self-harm: a cross-sectional study of the prevalence, correlates and patterns of medical service utilisation among patients admitted to a South African hospital

Version: 0 Date: 19 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Kaustubh Joag

Reviewer's report:

1. About the term prevalence - Study title uses a word 'prevalence' and correlate this with public health issue. To establish this topic to be a public health issues, the sample size should have been larger and drawn from multiple sites or larger population. But this sample is drawn from one hospital/site and sample size is only 238. Being a cross sectional study, this is a point prevalence in small population. So it will be better if this is explained in methodology in detail and mentioned as a limitation of the study. Also this prevalence can not be generalized to whole population. It may be public health issues but that link can not be established here with the current data. Unless an author of the study has relevant argument to make, i think this needs to be corrected.

2. I agree that correlation between ASU and patterns of medical service utilisation is established and there is need to be established further.

3. The points mentioned under limitations are important and need to be included in further study.

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