

Reviewer's report

Title: A descriptive study of youth risk behavior among urban and rural secondary school students in El Salvador

Version: 1 **Date:** 21 February 2006

Reviewer: Marc D Mitchell

Reviewer's report:

General

I felt this was an excellent study on a topic on which there is little published data. It was well written and researched and for this reason, I feel it is a good addition to the literature and should be published.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
none

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
none

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. I felt that the authors spend quite a lot of time discussing the differences within the sample groups (e.g. urban vs. rural) and not enough time commenting on both the absolute levels of risky behavior and comparisons with other groups in other countries including the US. For example, 7-10% of students had been forced to have sexual intercourse, which seems high but may not be significantly higher than the US numbers.
2. One type of analysis that may be interesting is to look at sub groups of students for certain questions. For example, it would appear that most females who are sexually active (7.8%) were forced to have sex (7.2%). Is this correct and if so, what does this mean?
3. There is considerable discussion of the data comparing the US Hispanic population and the El Salvador one. However, did the authors control for variables such as urban, age, etc.? It is not clear to me that these populations are in fact similar.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.

Marc Mitchell