Reviewer’s report

Title: Surveying alcohol and other drug use through telephone sampling: a comparison of landline and mobile phone samples

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Reviewer: Carol Pierannunzi

Reviewer’s report:

The article “Surveying alcohol and other drug use through telephone sampling: A comparison of landline and mobile phone samples,” focuses on an issue that is still salient for many health surveillance methodologists. In some cases the questions posed by this research have been answered and current surveillance methods have been adjusted to include cell phone interviews in many surveys. The unique attributes of this research are its locational focus (Australia) and its somewhat contradictory findings.

Overall the manuscript is well written and poses appropriate research questions. My only major concern is whether we already know the information in this research from other publications. The authors need to be clear how this is significantly different from previous publications.

Major Compulsory Revision:

1) There would be value added by including research on nonresponse bias in the background section. There is currently no theoretical basis for the research. It is currently just a test of what others have noted in practice. It would be helpful to connect this practical outcome to nonresponse bias research, especially since the authors have contradictory findings.

2) Table 1 should include the confidence intervals. I am assuming that Table 1 is unweighted—right? This should be made clearer. The numbers (321, 298, 361) in the lower part of Table 1 are confusing…is this the total for persons who have answered these questions? Why does the sample shrink by 700 people? If the N in the lower part of Table 1 is the number of respondents who answered each of the questions, the sample is very small.

3) There should be a description of the “incident rate ratio” and the odds ratios presented in Table 3—why did they use different approaches and how they may be compared. This needs to be added to the discussion in the methods section as well.

4. Correct the statement about the BRFSS on page 3—the misinterpretation of the BRFSS findings may be a result of the terms used. “Heavy drinking” on the BRFSS indicates average daily use, but the description here is closer to the BRFSS definition for “Binge drinking” which is related to larger number of drinks on a single occasion. In any case this needs cleaning up.
Minor Essential revisions:

Identify which AAPOR response rate standard was used (see page 4). Also there is a typo—should be AAPOR not AAOR. Also a typo on the top of page 4 where there is an extra parenthesis.

**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