Reviewer’s report

Title: The relation between smokeless tobacco and cancer in Northern Europe and North America. A commentary on differences between the conclusions reached by two recent reviews.

Version: 2 Date: 30 April 2009

Reviewer: Saman Warnakulasuriya

Reviewer’s report:

I would not recommend to publish a further review (funded by the tobacco Industry) comparing the two reviews within a short space of time. It is up to the readers to interpret any differences and consider whose work is more accurate. Boffetta’s publication comes from a very reputable international group and the readers are aware of the strengths of that review. Peter Lee’s biased selection of Lewin et al’s lower RR estimate, is an example in point.

If Peter Lee et al have any scientific issues to raise on Boffetta et al review, the proper way would be for them to write a letter to the Editor so that there is an opportunity for the authors of the original review to reply to their letter. If a letter is considered for publication, the Editor should as is the normal practice, publish both the letter and the reply in the same journal.

There is no scientific justification to publish a comparative review.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

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'