Reviewer's report

Title: Use of traditional cooking fuels and the risk of young adult cataract in rural Bangladesh: a hospital-based case-control study

Version: 5 Date: 12 April 2011

Reviewer: Astrid E Fletcher

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. Abstract
   a. Methods sections should be changed from
   “A majority of males (64-80% depending on group) had never used biomass cooking fuels, while the rest had used wood/dry leaves, with only 6 having used rice straw and/or cow dung”, to “A majority of males (64-80% depending on group) had never cooked, while the rest had used biomass cooking fuels, mainly wood/dry leaves, with only 6 having used rice straw and/or cow dung”
   b. Conclusions. The last sentence should be changed to reflect the possibility of confounding by other factors such as wealth which were not measured in the study.

2. The authors state that “In the male model, the comparator category is non-use of wood/dry leaves or any other biomass fuel.” I take this to mean that men who don’t cook are still included in the analyses both for men only or for all people combined. As stated before I do not consider that it is meaningful to include men who don’t cook because they therefore do not have a cooking exposure type for comparison.

3. The discussion compares the results of this study with other studies in India or Nepal (page 15 and 16); however those studies compared biomass fuels with clean fuels which the authors cannot do. They should modify their sentence on Page 15 “The association with case status of cooking with rice straw is consistent with the findings of several previous studies in which a link was detected between the use of cheaper, biomass or solid fuels and the risk of cataract.” The results for this study can only be interpreted in terms of the relative effects of one biomass fuel compared with another and not for biomass fuels compared to clean fuels.

Minor modifications

1. Tables 4, 5 and 6 should give the numbers in the analyses.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interests