Reviewer's report

Title: Association between substance use and psychosocial characteristics among adolescents of the Seychelles

Version: 1 Date: 3 March 2011

Reviewer: Shi Huang

Reviewer's report:

The authors conducted a cross-sectional study to examine the relationship between parenting practices, psychological characteristics and substance use behaviors in a sample of 1432 adolescents in Seychelles. Strengths of the study included a relatively large sample size, a representative sample and the potential contribution to the scientific knowledge for African countries. The manuscript is generally well written but I do have a number of comments:

1. Introduction: The statistics of adolescent substance use in Seychelles should be provided if available.

2. Method:
   A brief description about how the representative sample (p.4, line 6) was collected would be helpful in order to validate the generalability of the findings.

   It is unclear why the authors excluded participants aged 11 and 47 years old. Excluding about 6% of the sample may bias the results.

   The term alcohol misuse is not accurately defined by the authors because alcohol misuse means alcohol hazardous use, alcohol harmful use, and alcohol dependence.

   The authors didn't include which measures were used to collect the psychological characteristics and parental monitoring? References should be provided if available.

   It is unclear how and why the explanatory variables were dichotomized. Why continuous scores were not used as the predictors?

   Peer substance use and peer antisocial behaviors are important risk factors. Are these variables available in this study?

3. Results:
   Please provide demographic characteristics. For example, how many boys and girls in the sample? What is the mean age?

   The factor analysis results confirmed the authors' “anticipated conceptual socio-psychological significance or construct”. However, the main purpose of an exploratory factor analysis is to reduce the number of variables. It is unclear why the authors didn't conduct multiple regressions based on factor scores or sum
scores of items of each factor. Instead, the authors conducted multiple regressions with all of the raw predictors. Multicollinearity may be an issue with all nine explanatory variables in the regression.

It’s a proportional odds model instead of a proportional hazard model (p. 7, paragraph 3, line 6.).

4. Discussions:
It would be interesting to compare the substance use rates between this study and other national data in Seychelles, if data is available.

There are some well-established risk/protective factors for substance use that were not included in the study, for example, parent-adolescent communication, parent-adolescent connectedness, familial drug/alcohol use, family conflict, peer substance use, peer antisocial behaviors, exposures to media advertisements. At a minimum, this should be included as one of the limitations of this study.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests