Reviewer's report

Title: Feeding and smoking habits as cumulative risk factors for early childhood caries in toddlers, after adjustment for several behavioral determinants: a retrospective study.

Version: 3 Date: 8 March 2013

Reviewer: M Fontana

Reviewer's report:

Comments for authors:
The paper is interesting and much improved. Attached are some minor additional suggestions:

Minor Essential Revisions:
1) There are still some minor grammatical issues that should be addressed (e.g., role instead of rule, etc.)
2) Many terms are used throughout the abstract, manuscript, and tables to refer to advanced caries lesions (sometimes the term severe is used, sometimes high as in Table 1, etc.). Please be consistent and use only one terminology throughout. I suggest this term get clarified in the abstract as referring to children with cavitated dentinal lesions (as the term advanced or severe could be interpreted in many ways).
3) Abstract-Conclusion-Last sentence: Instead of “affect” I suggest modifying this to “are associated with”.
4) Introduction: The explanation provided in the response to the reviewers regarding how it was decided to set the thresholds to classify the responses regarding formula feeding-breastfeeding should be included in the manuscript, as it helps explain what seems like arbitrary and difficult to establish cut offs.
5) Materials and methods: It is unclear how calibration was done. As written it would appear 3 examiners looked at the first 65 children, and then GC was the gold standard examiner. What is the kappa for inter-examiner reliability for the collapsed ICDAS codes (1-3, 4 and 5-6)?
6) Was the excellent response rate to the questionnaire mailings (only 3.56% non-response) after just 1 mailing or were several attempts made?
7) Results: Although the authors state a significant association was found between ICDAS and sweet beverages (Table 2), the OR was rather low. Sometimes OR are presented in the text and sometimes they are not. I suggest being consistent.
8) When describing results for Table 4 in the text avoid the term “dummy” variables. In that same paragraph towards the end there is a typographical mistake as the OR is presented as 570.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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