Author's response to reviews

Title: The French Observational Cohort of Usual Smokers (FOCUS) cohort: French smokers perceptions and attitudes towards smoking cessation.

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Version: 2 Date: 26 January 2010

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

I am pleased to submit a revision of the article entitled “The French Observational Cohort of Usual Smokers (FOCUS) cohort: French smokers perceptions and attitudes towards smoking cessation”.

I have done my best to improve the manuscript following the reviewers’ suggestions:

Reviewer 1:
1. I added the following paragraph to the Discussion section: “This study had some limitations: the response rate was 66%, and older and retired people were over-represented. The weighting however corrected this bias to some extent, since its efficacy was 76.5%. These sampling biases are in the range of French competing surveys [6, 7].”
2. I did my best to avoid contracted forms of the verbs
3. I did my best to be consistent with the use of decimals. I chose to use no decimals when reporting percentages, and to use one decimal when reporting means and SDs in our results.
4. I corrected the few typos I found.

Reviewer 2:
1. I clearly stated the study objective in the abstract, by adding: “The objectives of this panel study were (1) to estimate smoking prevalence in France, (2) to identify smokers’ profiles according to their perceptions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to smoking cessation, (3) to determine predictive factors of quit attempts, and (4) to assess tobacco-related behaviours and their evolutions according to the changes in the smokers’ environments.” The space constraints were not a problem.
2. The manuscript was changed in accordance to reviewers’ request.
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. N/A
6. Two changes have been inserted in the text according to the two remarks:
a. In the Discussion section, the following paragraph has been added: “This study had some limitations: the response rate was 66%, and older and retired people were over-represented. The weighting however corrected this bias to some extent, since its efficacy was 76.5%. These sampling biases are in the range of French competing surveys [6, 7].”

b. In the results section: “In order to have a better comparison of our results to a competing French survey [6, 7], we also calculated the prevalence of smoking after exclusion of subjects over 75 years of age: the prevalence increased up to 22.1 %.”

Concerning the Editorial requests:

1. I added more context information in the Introduction section: “The reported survey took place a few months before the implementation of several concomitant changes in tobacco control in France, all in February 2007: the smoking ban in public indoors, a financial support of up to 50 Euros a year per quitter by National Health Services, and the launch of the new smoking cessation drug Varenicline.”

2. This type of population-based panel survey doesn’t require a ethics committee approval in France. However it requires a notification to the French personal data surveillance authorities. The following paragraph can be found at the beginning of the Methods section: “This study has been carried out by the Market Research Company TNS Healthcare Sofres. Although no nominative data were recorded, the study was notified to the French personal data surveillance authorities (Commission Nationale Informatique et Libertés) and was conducted according to the relevant national and European laws and consensus professional guidelines. Subjects enrolled into the study were informed of the objectives of the study, the nature of transmitted data and their use, and their right to refuse.”

I hope you will find all these changes satisfactory.

Best regards,