Reviewer's report

Title: Current use of smokeless tobacco among adolescents in the Republic of Congo

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Reviewer: Hans Gilljam

Reviewer's report:

However interesting it is to learn about tobacco use among African adolescents I have some serious concerns about this paper.

1. Are we sure that “other tobacco products” means smokeless tobacco?
2. Are these adolescents urban or rural?
3. The report is said to be based on the results from the 2006 GYTS report in the Republic Congo (Congo-Brazzaville). When the GYTS report on the web is consulted 3,109 students participated with a 57% response rate. The authors write that 3,304 participated with a 57% response rate.
4. The GYTS data are globally collected among 13-15 year olds but in this paper 32.5% are reported to be #12 years old. This is not mentioned in the web-report and if still true (as inside information known to the authors) it would have been important to tell the readers.
5. The inclusion of young people #12 is even more important to discuss as they seem to be the most avid tobacco users of all age groups. Table 2 shows that unadjusted SLT use is 30-50% more frequent in the #12 group of children! Also, the strong connection between SLT and smoking suggests that they smoke more as well (OR 9.00 unadj. and 6.65)! I have no previous knowledge about tobacco use in Congo and traditions might lead to more prevalent use among children, but I have my doubts.
6. The tables haven´t been checked thoroughly and in Table 1, the second line under “Parental smoking” listing percentages of families where one or both parents smoke the “Total” is obviously wrong.

The shortcomings listed above are many but what I miss the most is a background and discussion about traditions of use and products. This paper needs a massive revision and the cultural background might be beyond reach for the authors.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I have not received reimbursements, fees, funding or salary for anything relevant to this paper.
I hold no stocks. I have no patents and I am not applying for one.
No relevant competing interests and no non-financial competing interest in relation to this paper.