Reviewer's report

Title: Alcohol consumption in Estonia and Finland: Finbalt survey 1994-2006

Version: 1 Date: 18 September 2009

Reviewer: Augusto Di Castelnuovo

Reviewer's report:

General comments:

The question posed by the authors is well defined.
The methods are in general appropriate and well described, although some severe limitations exist.
Data are sound when authors provide an overview and comparison of alcohol consumption in Estonia and Finland. Data are less convincing when socio-demographic determinants of alcohol consumption are studied.
Reporting of data and discussion section may be improved in style and clarity, avoiding in the text an excessive duplication of information already offered in tables.
The discussion and conclusion are well balanced and adequately supported by the data, when authors provide an overview and comparison of alcohol consumption in Estonia and Finland. However, absence of data on former drinkers and not exhaustive information on binge drinking are strong limitations.
The study of socio-demographic determinants of alcohol consumption is poor, because of lack of data, i.e. smoking habit, additional indicators of social status, physical activity, dietary habits, medical conditions.
Previously debated limitations must be clearly stated.
The title and abstract accurately convey what the authors have been found.
The writing is acceptable, but some typographical mistakes are present in the text.

Discretionary Revisions

1) Reporting of data and discussion section may be improved in style and clarity, avoiding in the text an excessive duplication of information already offered in tables

Minor Essential Revisions

1) Please, clarify if total per capita alcohol consumption mentioned in Background was per year or what?
Major Compulsory Revisions


2) Absence of data on former drinkers and not exhaustive information on binge drinking are strong limitations, that have to be clearly stated in the discussion.

3) The study of socio-demographic determinants of alcohol consumption is poor, because of lack of data, i.e. smoking habit, additional indicators of social status, physical activity, dietary habits, medical conditions. If the authors are unable to study a more complete panel of potential socio-demographic determinants of alcohol consumption, the part of the manuscript dealing with determinants should be removed, and the manuscript should focus only on overview and comparison of alcohol consumption in Estonia and Finland, especially in relation to variations during years.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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