Reviewer's report

Title: The influence of parental smoking and family type on saliva cotinine in UK ethnic minority children: a cross sectional study.

Version: 1 Date: 15 September 2009

Reviewer: Giuseppe Gorini

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions
1. I suggest and kindly recommend to eliminate table 3: it is difficult to read and doesn't add significant results. Moreover, I recommend to cut last sentences in "Results" where main findings of table 3 are reported.

2. I suggest and kindly recommend to explain in brackets acronym "HSE" (Health Survey of England) in "Discussion".

3. Among limitations of the study, I suggest and kindly ask to add that in some ethnic groups (i.e., Black African), and in some modalities within some ethnic groups (i.e., maternal smoking and both parents smoking among South Asians), percentages of children exposed to ETS were very low (i.e., <5%). Thus, concentration of salivary cotinine in these categories could be less reliable. Finally, I would add a sentence like this one: "Larger studies could be useful in confirming these results."

4. I don't understand why you concluded your article reporting (last page) .."with evidence for social patterning in the White UK and Black African origin children."

Why did you mention Black African children? From data you showed I don't seem that the social patterning (i.e., the difference between % of least disadvantage and most advantage people who are exposed to ETS) is peculiar of Black Africans. Perhaps you would speak about Black Caribbean. Please, if I did not well understand, add one sentence in "Results" or "Discussion", explaining what social patterning among Black African children means.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.