Author's response to reviews

Title: A telephone survey of parental attitudes and behaviours regarding underage drinking

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Author's response to reviews: see over
11 May 2010

Prof Melissa Norton
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Re: MS: 1265542813279998

Dear Prof Norton,

Thank you for considering our paper entitled “A telephone survey of parental attitudes and behaviours regarding underage drinking”. Your email pointed to the Journals ethical requirements. The study design was submitted to the Chair of Research Ethics Committee of the Irish Faculties of Occupational Medicine and Public Health Medicine and was granted exemption. A statement to this effect has been added to the methods section.

We have read the reviewers’ reports and amended the paper accordingly. Detailed description of the changes made in response to reviewers’ comments is provided below. The attached revised manuscript has the changes highlighted using “track changes”.

Specific Responses to concerns raised by Reviewers

Reviewer 1 (Marion Kloep)

Reviewer 1 (Marion Kloep) did not make specific recommendations for alteration to the manuscript. She did express a view that the discussion was “rather long and repetitive”. As Reviewer 2 (Anthony Glendinning) indicated that the discussion was “neat and to the point”, we have opted not to shorten this section of the paper.

Reviewer 2 (Anthony Glendinning)

- Title.
  - This has been amended as suggested, substituting the word “teenage” to
Abstract.

- We have altered the abstract to focus on the results which emerged from analysis of responses by parents of teenagers only, not mentioning the fact that parents of younger children were also surveyed (although the results from these other parents are still reported in the main body of the paper).
- We have focused the modified results description on the two key issues suggested, these being parental views on binge drinking and on introducing children to alcohol.

Methods Section

- We have amended the sentence describing the estimate of sample size as suggested.
- “State simply what is meant by “binge drinking”.

We have added in a paragraph explaining the term binge drinking and the rationale for questions relating to this issue.

Statistical Analysis – Logistic Regression

- This reviewer makes suggestions regarding our use of logistic regression. We accept his points. In reality, the logistic regression which we undertook did nothing to alter or illuminate the results which emerged from the univariate analysis. (We did have a statement to this effect in the last sentence of the paragraph under the subheading of “Introducing children to alcohol at home” in the Results section of the originally submitted paper.)
- The reviewer appears to be under the impression that the results reported in table 3 were those which arose from logistic regression analysis. They are in fact the results of univariate analysis.
- In view of the methodological concerns regarding the use of logistic regression highlighted by the reviewer, the fact that it didn’t add anything of interest to the findings and the fact that it being mentioned has caused some confusion about the source of the odds ratios reported, we have decided to go one step further than that suggested by the reviewer. He
suggested dropping reports of regression analysis for two of the three questions examined. We have decided to drop it entirely. Therefore, we no longer mention it in the methods or results sections.

• **Statistical analysis – second paragraph**
  o First sentence of second paragraph has been altered as suggested.
  o We did undertake a reliability analysis of the cumulative permissiveness score. This is now reported in the last sentence of the last paragraph in the results section.
  o The modest reliability of the permissiveness score as indicted by the Cronbach alpha score is acknowledged now as an additional limitation of the study in the Discussion section of the paper.

• **Results**
  o As discussed above, we have addressed the first issue raised by the reviewer in his comments on this section by opting not to report the logistic regression analysis.
  o “Be clear the results in this latter section refer to parents with teens.” This has now been clarified in the paragraph under the subheading of “Introducing children to alcohol at home.”
  o Odds ratios have been added into the text as suggested.

• **Discussion**
  o “Socio-demographic factors may be bound up with ‘region’.....” This has now been acknowledges in the section dealing with study limitations (last paragraph of Discussion section).

We hope that you will consider this revised version for publication and we look forward to hearing your decision.

Yours sincerely & on behalf of the co-authors,
Dr Bobby Smyth MRCPsych
Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist