Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: Anthony Glendinning

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Title
Amend the title to, ‘A telephone survey of parental attitudes and behaviours regarding teenage drinking’ since that is the focus of the study.

Abstract

Methods: Please amend this sentence to include, ‘… a representative sample of 632 Irish parents of whom 234 parents had a teen between 13—17 years of age.’

Results: I recommend dropping the initial sentence about ‘…alcohol from another parent …’ It would be better to report the figures for teens in addition to those for the sample overall for ‘…attitudes to drinking 80 grams of alcohol or more per month …’ [and reword if this is “attitudes to binge-drinking”] in order to show levels of parental disapproval and then also for ‘…attitudes to introducing children to alcohol at home …’ to show the extent of parental sympathy for this “approach”.

MS

Background
The literature review is well done and the aims of the study are clearly and simply stated in the final paragraph of the background section.

Methods
For a number of reasons it would be better to change “was used” in the final sentence of the second paragraph in the methods section to, ‘This proportion implies that a sample of around 225 parents of teens would be required in order to estimate the proportion of Irish parents offering their teenage child an alcoholic drink to within +/-6% with 95% confidence.’

It would be good to state simply what is meant by the term “binge drinking” (over the period of one month, see Table 2)? In Table 3 this is labelled as ‘Parent classification of binge drinking.’

Statistical analysis
In the first paragraph, ‘Additionally, we conducted binary logistic regression …’ For technical reasons [for example, Fred C. Pampel, (2000), Logistic Regression:
A Primer. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.] it might be better to drop reports of regression analyses and corresponding results for two of the attitude questions and to revise it for the third question about a “continental” approach to the introduction of alcohol at home. In the remaining regression analysis (see, Table 3) – where relative odds of 10 and 0.1 are reported – it might be advisable to undertake some ‘pre-analysis’ of the explanatory factors because of heteroskedacity and a small sample.

Amend the first sentence of the second paragraph to read ‘…to the three attitude items, namely X, Y & Z (see, Table 2).’ Was a reliability analysis undertaken (accepting there are only three items and a small sample): what was Cronbach’s #?

Results
I recommend removing the binary logistic regression analysis for attitudes to ‘provision of alcohol by other parents’ and ‘concern about binge drinking’ and revising the analysis for attitudes to ‘introducing teens to alcohol at home’ (as explained above). Be clear the results in this latter sub-section refer to parents with teens (or all parents in the sample)? It would also be useful (once re-done) to include some odds ratios in the text for key results.

Discussion
This is neat and to the point. As a final consideration, socio-demographic factors may be bound up with ‘region’ and regional ‘effects’ might be explained away by work status, socio-economic groupings, etc.

Conclusions
The conclusion makes a useful and important point.