Reviewer's report

Title: The economic costs of alcohol consumption in Thailand, 2006

Version: 1 Date: 18 December 2009

Reviewer: Daniel Dedman

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes a well executed attempt to estimate economic costs of alcohol consumption in Thailand from a societal perspective. The paper is very well written and presented, with the aims clearly defined. I recommend that it should be published, with minor discretionary revisions.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

1. The inclusion of HIV in direct costs of healthcare and of productivity loss due to premature mortality: this remains slightly contentious because although alcohol use has been associated with unsafe sex, it may also be acting as a marker for risk-taking behaviour, and to this extent the association may be non-causal. If the authors include the costs of HIV, should they not also take into account other sexually transmitted infections? A second issue is whether the relative risk estimates derived from US or African studies are valid for the Thai population. Since the HIV associated component of costs associated with healthcare and premature mortality are very substantial, I feel this issue should be explored more thoroughly in the sensitivity analysis.

2. In estimating the cost of productivity loss due to premature mortality, the authors assume that individuals retain the same level of productivity right up to the time of death (as estimated by life expectancy), and explain that there is no official retirement age for agricultural workers. Could a sensitivity analysis be included to investigate the effect of introducing a retirement age of eg 65 or 70?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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