Reviewer's report

**Title:** Is web interviewing a good alternative to telephone interviewing? Findings from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Netherlands Survey

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 15 April 2010

**Reviewer:** Valentina Rosato

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting and well-written manuscript comparing web and telephone surveys in the Netherlands. Findings and conclusions are important given the advantages (in terms of costs, fieldwork, etc) of web compared to telephone surveys. Moreover, these results could be useful for future research. However, authors should consider the following suggestions:

**Minor Essential Revisions**

- The main message of the present manuscript is that web interviewing can be a good alternative to telephone interviewing, since there are indications that “web surveys may even obtain better data quality than telephone surveys”. Authors should add to the Discussion section at least a paragraph suggesting how to reduce the limitations of the web surveys, including the relatively high number of "Don’t know" in web interviewing.

- Authors could discuss strengths and limitations of a mixed-mode approach.

**Discretionary Revisions**

- Please, expand the acronym ITC at the first occurrence in the Abstract.

- Results section of the Abstract: please, clarify that the first sentence refers to the web sample and the second to the telephone one. Results should provide some data, including the cooperation rate according to both samples, and the main findings.

- In the methods, the authors mentioned the amount of reimbursement for each survey. How did respondents receive the compensation? Please specify.

- Do you have information on type of internet connection for your web sample? I believe that the generalization of your findings to other countries may be influenced by differences on availability of high-speed line. Please further consider this in the Discussion section.

- The #2 and t values are uninformative, I suggest to remove them from tables, leaving the p values, only.

- Authors could consider Clark et al., 2008, PMID: 18312649.

- Response rates (named “cooperation rates” in table 1) for both surveys are relatively high. This deserves to be considered in the Discussion section. However, comparisons between the two samples are biased by the different reimbursement given in the two surveys.
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