Reviewer's report

Title: A cross-sectional survey of compliance with national guidance for alcohol consumption by children: measuring risk factors, protective factors and social norms for excessive and unsupervised drinking

Version: 1 Date: 31 May 2010

Reviewer: Zila van der Meer Sanchez

Reviewer's report:

The authors investigated an important topic in the burgeoning literature on adolescents excessive drinking, which is likely to be well received by the readers of this journal. However, I believe that the manuscript needs "Minor Essential Revisions" before it is acceptable to be published in "BMC Public Health". My comments are articulated below.

Introduction: Major issues with the introduction in its present form include little cultural information about national guidance on alcohol consumption. International audience should not be familiarized with all the cultural background of this research aim (for example: is the national guidance punishable by law when disrespected? How / Who supervises?).

Method: I understood that more information about methods has already been published elsewhere. However, I think it would be important to have more information on the following aspects, in this manuscript:

Complex sample analysis? (survey weighted?) How weights were calculated in the analysis?

Total of schools in the North West region of England and % that was part of the sample. How sample was selected? Both public and private schools were included in the sample?

Ethics: was the research approved? Who gave the signed consent (parents? School dean or director?)

Include information about missing values for all analysis.

What was the statistical package used?

Is the instrument the ESPAD questionnaire?

Include the level of significance of the bivariate analysis and logistic regression.

The first sentence of the methodology should be placed in the introduction section.

Results:

Table 2 should be placed as part of the text (no additional file).

Important to inform the adjusted standardized residuals for expendable income and for deprivation in table 1.
Discussion: Authors stated that “adverse effects of alcohol were limited to four measures”, however I just found 3 adverse effects on table1.

This section was not structured so that it could clearly illuminate cultural similarities and differences among countries in the correlates of adolescent drinking and compliance with national guidance or public policies.

**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