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

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Reviewer: Chuan-Yu Chen

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Building upon an anonymous cross-sectional survey on young residents in the North West region of England, the aims of this project were to understand whether young people’s drinking falls within the guidelines, the characteristics of individuals whose drinking does not, how alcohol related harms relate to compliance, and risk factors associated with behaving outside of the guidance. In general, this manuscript is well written yet the manuscript may need some major revision for enhancement and clarification.

1. In the methodology:
   a. Although the authors cited references concerning methodological and ethical details, it’s better that the authors describe more in details about the sampling procedures and response rate in this work for the information of representativeness (or indeed lack of representativeness); as noted in earlier work in 2009, “Response rates were not recorded in each class as the sample was not intended to be representative but was opportunistic (for both students and classroom participation), with analyses focusing on relationships between variables recorded by individual participants.”
   b. Also, since the original survey covered all high school-ages, the authors should address the definition and procedure retrieve analytic sample of 11879 for the current work (obviously the number of the alcohol-experienced was different from that in Bellis et al. BMC Public Health 2009).
   c. Statistical approach and logics should be addressed in brief as well. For instance, what it the reference group in the panels of “unsupervised consumption and access,” and “excess drinking”. In the column of unsupervised inside drinking, is the reference group is the group who had no unsupervised drinking or what? What kind of logistic regression: ordinary or polytomous logistic regression? Is this series of analyse vulnerable to multiple comparison-related bias?

2. Results
   a. In table 2, asterisk signs should be positioned near the point estimates with statistical significance, rather than being closed to the reference group, especially in the variables with 3 or more categories.

3. Discussion:
a. It is not clear when the guidance started to be implemented in UK, also how the questions concerning alcohol drinking, accessibility, and frequency were asked in the questionnaires? If the questions were asked in lifetime frame, then there is no de facto compliance in this study, i.e., alcohol drinking or access might have taken place before the national guidance is active.

b. The author should consider integrate one variable concerning" the awareness of national guidance" in the analyses to see whether heavy drinking or accessibility may be associated with awareness, unless the authors have strong belief that everyone participants should be aware of this guidance for sure.

c. The connection between access with frequent (heavy) drinking is very likely to be reciprocal, therefore the authors should address more in such phenomena.

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'