Reviewer's report

Title: Estimating Alcohol-Related Premature Mortality in San Francisco: Use of Population-Attributable Fractions from the Global Burden of Disease Study

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Reviewer: Juergen Rehm

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Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors are trying to look into burden of premature mortality in San Francisco.

As they do not have the individual elements for such a calculation (i.e. exposure and risk relations) they try three model calculations:

Method 1 assumed that all San Franciscans drink like populations in developed economies. These estimates were limited to alcohol-related harm.

Method 2 modified these estimates by including several beneficial effects.

Method 3 assumed that Latino and Asian Franciscans drink alcohol like populations in the global regions related to their ethnicity.

I congratulate the authors for their creative solution but have two major suggestions for improving the current estimates and making the comparisons more meaningful and better interpretable:

a) The last estimates for GBD were for 2004 (WHO, 2009) and that would allow to use estimates for Americas A (mainly US and Canada) and this would be closer to San Francisco than all high income countries.

b) Also surveys exist for better estimating consumption in San Francisco (or for California as a better proxy) which could be used with the published risk relations of GBD to estimate the AAFs directly. This could provide a gold standard for comparison.

Without these changes I see problems in interpretation of the results, as there is no comparison which could be used as gold or silver standard.

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'