Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of the Chinese new warning labels on knowledge, cigarette giving and quitting

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Reviewer: Livia Giordano

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General
-The work of Qin and colleagues aimed to determine the impact of warning labels of cigarette packages on knowledge, cigarette quitting and giving in a Chinese population. The work is interesting and can give an important contribute in this field despite some criticisms in the sampling strategies.

Major Compulsory revisions

Perceived harm of cigarette smoking
It is not clear the method used by the authors in determining the knowledge of the harm to health of cigarette smoking. Authors say that all the participants were asked whether they knew the harm to health of cigarette smoking and the specific disease related to cigarette smoking from label A and B and that all the participants were further asked whether they knew that cigarette smoking results in specific diseases from label C-F. What does it mean? That each participant was showed all the labels (from A to F) consequentially? But considering that both label A and B have generic warning labels and do not refer to any specific disease how can they determine different level of knowledge? The only difference between label A and B is that the first has only a warning label (smoking is harmful to your health) written in Chinese and on one side of the pack; the second has to labels 'smoking is harmful to your health', and 'quit smoking reduces health risk' on the front and back faces of the package, in Chinese and English respectively. Authors should comment on this. The results achieved for label C-F is also not clear. If the text was translated in Chinese it is obvious that automatically the interviewer suggested the response (or the response can be deducted by the pictures). The authors should better describe the method.

Perceived impact of quitting
In the text (methods) the authors say that three questions concerning the impact of quitting have been included in the interview only for cigarette smokers. Table 3 seems to be referred to all the participants. Where is the truth? If the question has been addressed to everybody why to consider both smoker and not smokers? It would be more useful to analyze this parameter only in the smoker or former smoker group and stratifying the analysis for the other social
characteristics (age, gender, educational level). The opinion of non smokers can be predictable and not relevant. Furthermore how can be interpreted the “impact of quitting” in non-Smokers?

In the methods session authors stated that they asked the current smokers which warning label has the most or the least impact on the quitting. No results on this topic are presented and discussed.

Perceived impact on cigarette giving
20.8% and 25.2% of participants reported not giving cigarette with label A and B respectively and 80% with label C-F. What the proportion of participants reported not giving cigarettes at all independently from the kind of warning labels? What proportion of participants reported giving cigarettes notwithstanding the warning label?

When the authors investigated which warning label has the least or the most impact on cigarette giving, what they intend to know? It is not clear. Again no results on this topic in the text.

Probably the more familiar labels (A and B) could have influenced the response compared to the foreign ones. Authors should comment on this in the discussion.

VERY IMPORTANT: all the tables do not contain absolute numbers; please insert in each row also these values in order to give the readers clear guidance on the sample proportions. Nobody refused to answer or was not able to give a response??

Knowledge of the WHO FCTC and its provision for cigarette package
It would be interesting to know the smoking status and the socio-demographic characteristics of the 32.4% of the participants who knew the FCTC.

Minor Essential Revisions
The Background starts presenting the prevalence of smoking habits in China which refers to a very old reference (1999). No more recent data?

Please check the percentages on page 8 (results): 78.8% (14/85)….it is not clear or correct.

How the participants were recruited to participate to the face to face interview? By letter, by phone, in person? And when? How many persons refused to participate?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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’