Reviewer's report

Title: Smoking differences between employees in university faculties in Estonia and changes during the country’s transition

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Reviewer: Anu Kasmel

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Review of the manuscript

“Smoking differences between employees in university faculties in Estonia and changes during the country’s transition”
submitted by Rauno Heikkinen, Jana Kivastik, Peet-Henn Kingisepp, Simo Näyhä

The text is well written and easy to follow. The study is relevant to the audience and it addresses important problem not only for the particular institution in particular country but also for the larger health community especially for health promotion professionals in the countries experienced rapid transition.

The strengths of the paper is the solid list of references and its focus to the important stakeholders group in health promotion point of view. The article adds to the existing literature on the subject in question.

Review questions:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   The research question posed is clear, concise and it is well articulated. The background chapter in the article builds a logical case and context for the problem statement.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   The design of the study is mainly plausible and appropriate for the research question – it is well defined and clearly described. However, there are two questions. 1) there is mentioned that questions for respondents in two studies were not completely identical – it would be clarifying if this differences would be described, 2) as there are more determinants of smoking behavior than just awareness and education, I would suggest authors to mention why these have left out in adjustment. Moreover, the authors could add the short description of the non-response.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   The sampling procedures are sufficiently described. However in some faculties the sample size is quite limited. I would suggest to make and describe the power control.
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes it does. Results are organized in a way that is easy to understand. They are presented in context and effectively. Tables are used judiciously and agree with the text.

5. Are the discussions and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Discussions of the results are basically appropriate. The conclusions follow from the design, methods, and results; justification of conclusions is well articulated. I would suggest to add discussion on possible influence of the non-identical questions to the results

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
The title generally accurately convey the content of the study – however I would suggest to add to the title the name of study university as there are many universities in study country and data are not unconditionally generalizable to the other universities.

The abstract is structured well (background, methods, results, conclusions) and congruent with the text. The conclusions in the abstract are justified by the information in the abstract and the text. However the year of the study could be mentioned in the abstract for accurate understanding of the findings.

7. Is the writing acceptable?
Reviewer is not native English speaking person and will not take the authority to assess the quality of the language. However the reviewer would ask the authors to check the references as there are several defects.

There is no apparent conflict of interest.

In conclusion:
Reviewer suggest editors to accept the manuscript after minor essential revisions, which the authors can be trusted to correct.

Sincerely
Dr. Anu Kasmel

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests