Reviewer's report


Version: 1 Date: 10 November 2010

Reviewer: Micaela Coady

Reviewer's report:

• Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Methods (2nd paragraph, pg. 5): My main criticism of this paper is that additional information on the 2 indices of state tobacco control policies is needed, including specific definitions of the factors included in each index, how they were used previously, how they were developed, etc. Publications from the ASSIST trail are referenced, but since the indices represent such a large part of this analysis, additional information should be included in the text of this paper. I had trouble interpreting and understanding the results because this important information was lacking.

2. Methods (2nd paragraph, pg. 4): Did you explore using another method to assess the statistical significance of the relative percentage change in smoking prevalence across years, other than just looking at the overlapping confidence intervals?

3. Conclusions (1st paragraph, pg. 12): Suggest including more information from other studies on correlations between taxes and smoking bans and declines in prevalence, as well as any other literature showing that components of the SOTC index are/are not correlated. Overall, there needs to be additional information on the interpretation of these results, and grounding in the current research base. Do you have a hypothesis as to why funding and other factors included in SOTC are not correlated with declines in prevalence? I've mentioned earlier that it would be helpful to have more information about the 2 indices, but is there information in SOTC regarding what aspects of tobacco control programs the funding is being directed towards? Could this explain some of the variation seen?

• Minor Essential Revisions

1. Abstract: I would suggestion mentioning that SOTC is not correlated in men, only in women

2. Background (1st paragraph, pg. 3): ‘tobacco control program' should be plural

3. Methods (2nd paragraph, pg. 5): ‘Hispanics’ should not be plural; an additional ‘during’ is included in sentence 5

4. Conclusions (1st paragraph, pg. 10): What is your explanation for the finding that the percent reduction in smoking was not correlated with the baseline
smoking prevalence? I thought this was interesting, and potentially warranted additional discussion in the paper.

5. Conclusions (4th paragraph, pg. 11): I don't think that not having the most recent state-level data to address the recent stall in the prevalence nationally should be considered a limitation of this paper. This analysis focuses on trends through 2006/2007 only; more recent national data could be included in the conclusions section to point out the most recent trends and highlight potential next steps, etc., but I don't think it needs to be included as a limitation.

6. Table 1: suggest adding additional information in the footnote of the table to explain the data presented for the 2 indices

• Discretionary Revisions

1. If you need to save space, I don’t think that the analysis of 1998/1999 – 2006/2007 is needed—it doesn’t add much value and assessing trends over the longer timeframe, the main focus of the paper, is sufficient.

2. Results (2nd paragraph, pg. 6): Mention that prevalence decreased across time period in all but X number of states

3. Conclusions (3rd paragraph, pg. 9): Suggest referring to any available literature on price elasticity of demand of cigarettes by gender and comparing/contrastng your results on the IOI index in women vs. men.

**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