Reviewer’s report

Title: Parental alcohol use and adolescent school adjustment in the general population: results from the HUNT study

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Reviewer: Anshu Shrestha

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General

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Overall, the revised manuscript has greatly improved. There are a few more suggestions, mainly discretionary or minor. Specific comments/suggestions are listed below under each section heading and are referred by paragraph number within each section.

Discretionary or minor revisions

Abstract:
1. Background: The purpose of the study should be included within this section instead of method.

2. Method: Include only a brief description of the study population and analysis method.

3. Result: Line #5 – Since, statistical analysis at most provides measures of association, one can only infer the outcome in terms of association and not effects. The authors should change the term accordingly here and through out the manuscript.

4. Conclusion: Include only the main finding of the study and public health implication if any or future research.

Methods

Parental alcohol use:
1. Paragraph#2: The authors have included the average consumption of alcohol abusers, which is great. However, it is not very clear what the points (16.8 and 26.7) mean. Do those numbers represent average drinks consumed per day, week, or month, or something else? This needs more clarification.

Seeing parents drunk:
2. ".0.68 in 96 pairs of the same age." – Does this relate to correlation between twins? Please clarify.
Adolescent mental distress:
3. The authors mention about reliability of the measure. Was it also validated? If so, please mention that as well.

Parental mental distress:
4. The last sentence regarding top 10% --it would be more informative to readers if the authors also provide average scores and range of scores for those parents for comparison purposes.

Demographics:
5. Last sentence: "...together, and unknown and deceased parents."
Suggested: "...together, unknown, and ...

Missing data:
6. First paragraph, last line: Please also include whether the data reported on tables are from the analyses with imputed data or without.

Results
7. Second paragraph: The authors need to add table number within parentheses to indicate which table contains these data.

Interactions:
8. First sentence is redundant as it has already been mentioned under "statistical analyses."

Discussion
Paragraph#2, 3rd line:
9. The authors mention the potential association between maternal drinking during pregnancy and their finding, however there is no pregnancy data to support this, which needs to be mentioned as well.

Paragraph#4:
10. Regarding confounding by parental mental distress, the effect size for parental alcohol use does seem to change in the full model that includes this variable (Table 3), indicating confounding by at least some of the variables in the model. However, first of all, the model has many variables including potential intermediate variables making it difficult to examine the role of parental mental distress on the relationship between parental alcohol use and adolescent school adjustment. Secondly, if some variables, such as adolescent mental distress, are indeed intermediate variables, then including them in the model examining the relationship between parental alcohol use and school adjustment may not be the best approach (see Herting JR (2002). Evaluating and rejecting true mediation models: a cautionary note. Prevention Science, 3(4): 285-289). Hence, in order to evaluate confounding role of parental psychosocial characteristics, I suggest including those variables in the model reported in the lower part of Table 1.
Paragraph#5:
11. Adolescent mental distress and seeing parents drunk seem to be stronger predictors of school adjustment than parental alcohol use (compare outcomes on tables 1 and 2) and this should be mentioned. As for the former's intermediary role, this approach may not be sufficient to evaluate it properly (see my comments above).

Paragraph#6, last sentence:
12. This sentence needs to be clarified or elaborated. Not quite sure what the authors meant by "..reflect correlated errors due to response style."

13. "alcholised parent" – suggested: alcoholic parent

Methodological considerations
Paragraph#2:
14. "If this underreporting..individuals, misclassification occurs."
Suggested: " If this underreporting..individuals, non-misclassification occurs."

15. "However, the alcohol..showed high reliability"—need to include supporting data or information to make such strong assertion.

16. "..the large majority of these are true cases"—again this is a strong assertion and need supporting data.

17. "May be paternal.., on which there are were.."—need to clarify this sentence.

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.