Reviewer's report

Title: A survey of smoking prevalence and interest in quitting among social and community service organisation clients: a unique opportunity for reaching the highly disadvantaged

Version: 1 Date: 12 August 2011

Reviewer: Linda L Pederson

Reviewer's report:

• Major Compulsory Revisions

This study examines interest in quitting in a disadvantaged population of smokers in Australia. There are several issues and questions that need to be addressed with regard to the methods and interpretation of the research.

1. The title should include Australia as the location for the research

2. The abstract should include a brief description of what an SCSO is for people who do not know. The total number of clients approached should be added. In the results it is not clear how occasional smoking is defined. The % provided for those who had made an average of two quit attempts is not given. The data for the general population of smokers in Australia should be added and the word “significantly” removed from the comparisons if statistical tests were not done. The word substantially could be used instead. The conclusion seems to go beyond the data.

3. Introduction – the 2020 target for smoking prevalence is not given. What is the difference between disadvantaged smokers and highly disadvantaged smokers? There are some references provided (9-12) with no information given about what was found in these studies.

4. Methods – I think that the use of a touch screen interview is a great idea. Were the data collected anonymously or confidentially? How were the sites selected? What are the definitions of distressed or ill and how was this determined? What is an emergency relief interview? What is the definition of occasional smoking exactly – once a week, less than once a week?? What was done with people who were occasional smokers with regard to the question about age started to smoke daily?

5. Results – the means for ages for participants and nons should be given. Information on the % of individuals who made 2 or more quit attempts should be given, along with a range of numbers of quit attempts. It is interesting that in table 3 - 33.2% indicated that they didn’t know when questioned about their intention to quit – it might be interesting to speculate on how this group could be assisted. In the section on receiving help from the SCSO, it is not clear what group the 52.8% is referring to.

6. Discussion – it is not surprising that individuals in this group have not used NRT given the cost issues; this fact could be mentioned. In my opinion it would
be interesting to follow up this research with some qualitative interviews particularly with reference to the use of quit lines. I looked for such a suggestion in the discussion. The final recommendation about the SCSO involvement is interesting, but unless there is some data available on effectiveness of such interventions, it is not warranted.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests