Reviewer’s report

Title: A qualitative exploration of smokers' views regarding a community-based mobile stop smoking service

Version: 1 Date: 20 September 2011

Reviewer: Maansi Bansal-Travers

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General comments

Overall, I found this to be a very interesting and well written manuscript summarizing a mobile stop smoking service that was evaluated in several areas of Nottingham. The authors suggest that the MSSS was perceived as more accessible and less threatening to approach and consider making a quit attempt compared to making an appointment at the stop smoking clinic that is available. This concept is very interesting and should certainly be explored further as it seems to reduce barriers to accessing cessation services, a hurdle that tobacco control advocates are constantly trying to overcome.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Page 3: Is the last sentence referring to the annual average of 57% abstinent at 4 weeks in 2001 or 2005? This sentence might be rephrased to clarify the point.

2. Page 4: I recommend further elaboration on the methods of the MSSS. Given that the MSSS seems to be a novel and somewhat successful approach at promoting quit attempts, it would be helpful for the authors to give the readers more details regarding the details of the approach. The authors might also consider including a figure with a photo of the actual service trailer.

3. Some questions that I had as I read through the methods include: how long was 1 appointment? Were there wait times between clients? Did clients have to make appointments to see the counselors? Did everyone receive all 3 forms of follow-up (face-to-face, reactive and proactive telephone support) or just one? How long was the actual period between initial visit and follow-up (“few days”)? How many follow-up contacts were there and at what intervals? How long did the follow-up appointment last? Was any incentive given to complete follow-up?

4. Page 5: Were there demographic or SES differences between the 40 individuals contacted and the 30 individuals that were not attempted to be contacted?

5. Page 9: While I found the results interesting in that many participants found this type of service to be “more accessible” and they were more likely to approach it and make that the day they were going to quit smoking, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that spontaneous quit attempts are not as
successful and have a high rate of relapse compared to quit attempts that smokers are prepared for and have planned out. The authors should consider adding a paragraph in the discussion regarding these different quit attempts and whether this type of service is ultimately successful comparing costs of the service (also not included in manuscript) and benefits in the short and long term.

6. Page 9: The first sentence of the discussion states that this type of service may be effective to engage those from socially disadvantaged groups. However, a stated limitation of the paper is the inability to ascertain if disadvantaged groups were reached by this intervention. Please explain.

Minor Essential Revisions

7. Page 10: Rephrase “…for others, it built on pre-existing thoughts about quitting which had not been acted upon, a finding that is supported in the literature.”

8. Page 10: Rephrase “…particularly conducive for attracting this group of smokers, mainly because their quit…”

9. Page 10: Punctuation: add “;” after “put them at ease; for”

Discretionary Revisions

10. Page 3: Consider adding an additional sentence explaining why “when considering breast cancer screening, services located at non-health facilities were perceived as more accessible than those at health facilities [12].”

11. Page 3: Consider adding another sentence explaining why the Roy Castle Fag Ends SSS in Liverpool is an example of a client-led approach is successful and what it means that it is “flexible”.

12. Page 5: When were the interviews conducted at what time point? How long did they take?

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