Reviewer's report

Title: Socioeconomic status, urbanization and risk behaviours in Mexican youth: an analysis of three cross-sectional surveys

Version: 6 Date: 13 September 2011

Reviewer: Joanna Stewart

Reviewer's report:

1. Abstract Methods. As I commented last review, the second to last sentence in this method is misleading. It reads as if it is classified according to the number of inhabitants in a house (residence = house) I do not believe this is what you mean. A solution would be to replace the word residence with locality.

2. Abstract conclusions – In the results you state no association was found between locality size and sexual initiation. However in the conclusions you state the relationship of locality size to sexual behaviours is moderated by SES. This is contradictory to the results statement and should be restricted to condom use.

3. Methods 2nd paragraph - A brief definition of what makes a household ‘eligible’ would help in the understanding of the sample

4. Methods p10, top, clarify whether the quartiles were the population or sample quartiles.

5. Methods last paragraph. Ai and Norton’s approach does not suggest not looking at the interaction term although certainly the method of doing so is more complex. If you are not going to report anything about the overall interaction you need to be very cautious about commenting on differences in effects in different subgroups as you have no evidence that observed differences are real. You certainly must not state they differ significantly.

6. Throughout the reporting on table 2 and the graph of the same data nothing but broad patterns should be commented on, in particular given you have not reported overall interactions. – ie you should not pick out scattered ‘significant’ results where there is not an overall pattern. They are most unlikely to be real and it makes the reading of the results very difficult. With no overall test reported the results should not be over interpreted.

7. P12 3rd paragraph – 1st sentence (referring to condom use) not correct.

8. Discussion – need to make it plain that the differences were for condom use – not sexual behaviours in general

9. The limitations of the study still need to include reference to the fact there were different criteria for selection of households in different surveys (and hence locality types). Despite the authors refuting that this is so the methods state that

1. for rural those included were households not included (therefore probably not eligible?) in the original intervention in the areas originally selected plus others from areas later selected but not the most marginalised which were included in
the first round of intervention. This second group were people in selected areas but not necessarily eligible households.

2. The small urban where households in area selected so may or may not have been in households eligible

3. The large urban sampled everyone, in areas eligible and not, although in different ratios and using a different eligibility criteria with some of the eligible households excluded as the intervention had started.

Although it is very hard to get ones head around how these differences will have affected the characteristics of those selected in the different regions, particularly as no explanation has been given as to what makes a household ‘eligible’ it will most definitely have had some effect and therefore needs to be acknowledged.

Minor

1. Background – 2nd paragraph – second sentence needs rewording – escalation of rate of worlds urban areas’ does not make sense. Do you mean the proportion of people living in urban areas?

2. 3rd paragraph – needs editing as below

Official statistics indicate that about 46% of Mexicans live in poverty, and 10% in extreme poverty [5]. Additional to this figure, a recent concern in the country relates to the young population: different surveys have show that about 22% of individuals between 12 and 29 years old are neither in school nor working [6].

3. 4th paragraph, last sentence – insert ‘are’ after ‘which’


5. Methods, Sampling procedures and data collection – 2nd paragraph 2nd sentence needs editing – not ‘two moments’

6. Results p12 2nd paragraph – 6th line – find, not found.

7. P14 2nd paragraph – provide (not provides)

8. P15 2nd para - rapid, not rapidly

9. P16 2nd paragraph ‘are usually reinforced each other’ needs rewording.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

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