Reviewer’s report

Title: Reactions to FDA Regulation of Tobacco Products: Findings from the 2009 ITC United States Survey

Version: 1 Date: 27 September 2011

Reviewer: adam goldstien

Reviewer’s report:

Interesting paper with some useful data, but also some methodological and other concerns as below. Thank you for the opportunity to provide peer review.

The premise is a problem- that smokers would be aware of new law less than six months after the law’s passage. Recommend toning down this point and focusing on other issues.

Please make more clear why the attitudes of smokers about FSPTCA is relevant. Please make the case stronger in the intro.

Not sure why you combined the evaluation of smoker packs with the analysis of smoker attitudes. These seem like fairly different topics. It seems like that in abstract and even more so in results. Would recommend removing that analysis from the paper and perhaps make it a separate analysis/letter.

It is also unclear why the researchers had smokers return packs of cigarettes to see about compliance with FDA. Why not simply go to the store and look at the packs?

How do you know the packs sent for analysis were not bought before the FSPTCA law was passed?

The discussion about the terms such as “light” being used inappropriately by tobacco manufacturers, based on your survey in late 2009, but they did not have to quit using such terms until July, 2010. Please explain as it applies to your work and results.

Your intro focuses broadly on FDA potential interventions under FSPTCA, such as new warning labels, but your research has little to do with that intervention. Please tie your introduction to most relevant data to your study- e.g. why surveys of smokers can inform policy. It is perhaps clear to you why baseline data from sample of smokers about these issues is relevant, but you do not make the case.

You do say that this current survey is useful to measure baseline attitudes of smokers for the FSPTCA, but it appears you have annual surveys of smokers since 2002, so it is a little confusing (see above comment). How does this study relate, if at all to prior surveys?

What stopped potential participants from simply going out and buying a pack of cigarettes to get the $25?
It is a little unclear how eligibility for participating in cigarette pack analysis was determined and why only 69% were eligible. Only a third of sample ultimately completed pack analysis (and less than 50% of eligible smokers). Why is this the case? What impact does this have on results?

Can combine T2 and T3 (3 q’s total) into one table or eliminate T3 and simply put into text. Could also eliminate T4, 5 & 6, as results can simply be summarized in text.

You did several analyses by gender, income and education, but you do not mention them in your discussion anywhere. It would also be good to analyze the results by levels of smoking?

It is necessary to mention limitations to your study. It would be good to discuss these for the reader.

Despite reading the paper twice, I am left with a “so?” sort of reaction. I think you need to make a case stronger for the rationale for this study, and why your results are important. I think it is a good study, but can be stronger.

How will this “baseline” data be useful in the future?

**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.