Reviewer's report

Title: Smoking and Health-Related Quality of Life in English General Population: Implications for Economic Evaluations

Version: 1 Date: 9 January 2012

Reviewer: Sherry Emery

Reviewer's report:

My comments in CAPS:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? YES.
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? YES.
3. Are the data sound? YES. THE AUTHORS MAKE A SOLID CASE FOR USING OLS, DESPITE THE VIOLATION OF THE NORMALITY ASSUMPTION. DID THEY PERFORM FURTHER DIAGNOSTIC TESTS ON THE ERROR TERMS, WHICH COULD PROVIDE THEM INFORMATION THAT MIGHT ALLOW THEM TO USE OTHER TECHNIQUES TO COMPENSATE FOR THE NON-NORMAL DATA?
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? YES.
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? YES. PLEASE SEE MINOR SUGGESTIONS BELOW.
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? YES 7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? YES 8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? YES.
9. Is the writing acceptable? VERY CLEAR WRITING.

I HAVE A FEW SPECIFIC COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS, WHICH I'D LIKE TO SEE ADDRESSED PRIOR TO PUBLICATION:


2. ON PAGE 8, THE AUTHORS REFER TO TARIFF DATA FOR THE FIRST TIME. YET, ON PAGE 13, THEY DEFINE WHAT TARIFF DATA ARE. PLEASE MOVE THE DEFINITION OF TARIFF DATA TO THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE TERM.

3. ON PAGE 13, PLEASE PROVE AN INTERPRETATION OF THE MEANING/RELATIVE VALUE OF THE DIFFERENCES IN HRQoL OBSERVED.
4. IN THE DISCUSSION SECTION, ON PAGE 20, THE AUTHORS' DISCUSSION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SMOKING AND DEPRESSION PRESUMES THAT SMOKING CAUSES DEPRESSION. IT IS ENTIRELY PLAUSIBLE--IF NOT MORE LIKELY--THAT DEPRESSION 'CAUSES' SMOKING. IN FACT, THE CONCLUSION THAT 'MAKING SMOKERS QUIT MAY LEAD TO A MASSIVE REDUCTION IN MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS' SEEMS MISLEADING, AT BEST. I THINK A MORE REASONABLE TAKE ON THIS RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE THAT IF SMOKERS SUCCESSFULLY QUIT, IT WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT TO MONITOR THEIR MENTAL HEALTH STATUS, IN ORDER TO ASSURE SUCCESSFUL ABSTENENCE. OR EVEN, THAT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES MAY NEED TO BE ADDRESSED PRIOR TO, OR IN CONCERT WITH, SMOKING CESSATION.

5. FINALLY--THIS IS A BIT NIT-PICKY, BUT I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT: PLEASE DO NOT FRAME DISCUSSION IN TERMS OF 'MAKING' SMOKERS QUIT. 'ENCOURAGING, SUPPORTING OR FACILITATING CESSATION OR QUITTING WOULD BE MUCH MORE PALATABLE.