Reviewer's report

**Title:** Factors affecting commencement and cessation of smoking behaviour in Malaysian adults

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 7 November 2011

**Reviewer:** Hai-Yen Sung

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The objective of this study was to investigate factors associated with smoking initiation and cessation among adults in Malaysia. Potentially the results from this study can provide policy implication for designing smoking prevention and intervention programs. However, I found several major problems in study design and methodology.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. There is a lack of essential details in the Methods section. When was the survey conducted? What are the outcome variables? What are the covariates and their definitions?

2. There is a lack of explanation about the definition of “smokers” in this study. Do smokers include those who smoke regular cigarettes, and those who smoke kretek or hand-rolled cigarettes such as bidi and rokok daun? What proportion of smokers who smoked each type of these “smoked products”? Since these tobacco products are different, the mean age of initiation and the predictors of smoking initiation are probably different among different types of smokers (i.e., regular cigarette smokers, rokok daun smokers, etc.). It is important to examine this relationship separately for each type of smokers.

3. The authors seemed to mix up the concept between ever smoking and current smoking. The percentage figures reported in Table 1 should refer to the prevalence of ever smokers. Thus, the smoking prevalence results reported in this study are “ever smoking” prevalence rates. It is important to clarify this distinction when comparing to the literature, because most of studies in the literature reported “current smoking” prevalence.

4. It is inappropriate to make conclusions based on Tables 1-2 which did not control for other confounding factors. For example, on page 10, 1st paragraph, it was stated “Among the various ethnic groups in this country, the Chinese was found to be more likely to quit smoking.” However, the multivariate regression results from Table 4 showed that Chinese did not significantly differ from Malay in quitting smoking.

5. Tables 1-2 provide separate descriptive results for males and females without showing the results for the combined genders. However, the analyses for Tables 3-4 are for the combined genders. It is hard to relate Tables 1-2 to Tables 3-4.
Minor Essential Revisions

1. Tables 1-2 contain many more variables than Tables 3-4? Were these other variables considered in the multivariate regression models?

2. The sample size for Orang Asli is too small to yield reliable estimates. Why was this group classified as a separate group?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.