Reviewer's report

Title: Trends in socioeconomic inequalities in smoking prevalence, consumption, initiation, and cessation between 2001 and 2008 in the Netherlands. Findings from a national population survey.

Version: 2 Date: 17 March 2012

Reviewer: Ashleigh Guillaumier

Reviewer's report:

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

Abstract
- Background & Conclusions: You refer to the “fourth stage” of the smoking epidemic, however this is not explained until the introduction section of the manuscript. Either rephrase in the abstract, or remove, as this is not common terminology in the area.
- Results, first section: “smokers” not “smoker”
- Results: Clarify whether the results you are summarising here are significant results or non-significant trends in the data.

Background
- Para 1, 2nd sentence: “single most important” not “most important single”
- Para 1, last sentence: commas after Canada, Aus and NZ are in the wrong place – they should appear after the insertion of the in-text citation
- Para 2, 3rd sentence: what are the “mixed results” you are referring to. You need to elaborate on this statement, as presumably this is what the manuscript is building on.

Methods
- Sample, para 2, 3rd sentence: You state that approx. 18,000 participate in the survey – how many people are invited to participate? What is the consent rate?
- Sample, para 2, last sentence: Is there a reference for the weighted data, or is this something the authors have done? If so, more information is required.

Results
- It is not clear to me why you have presented results for the 2001 and 2008 survey results, and then changes across the 8-year time period the survey was tracked for. Please clarify why you are presenting these two sets of results, when presumably the changes over time are of the most interest, and these results would also show the difference between 2001 and 2008.
- Changes in SES inequalities between 2001 and 2008: Please also include the results for changes in male smoking prevalence, initiation and cessation.
Discussion
- A discussion of the implications of the results should be included. Also, the reporting of changes in consumption, take up and quit rates is a focal point of the paper – you should elaborate on why it is important to report this data, and what this information could be used for.
- You could consider including a brief comparison of trends in other Western countries

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

Methods
- Sample, para 1, 3rd sentence: What is TNS NIPO?
- Questionnaire: “education level” not “educational level” (this is throughout the manuscript).

Results
- SES inequalities in 2001 and 2008: The first paragraph describes the trends in Figures 1 and 2, and the second paragraph gives the significance testing results of this data. I think this section of the results would read better if these two paragraphs were combined and reduced. Currently it reads as if you are repeating results and it becomes a little confusing.

Discussion
- You could consider including a brief comparison of SES smoking trends in other countries

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 I have no competing interests