Reviewer's report

Title: Household Secondhand Smoke Exposure of Elementary Schoolchildren in Southern Taiwan and their Confidence in Avoiding Exposure: a Cross-sectional Study

Version: 1 Date: 17 October 2011

Reviewer: Todd Heard

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The aim of the paper is unclear. In the background section of the paper the authors describe the aim of the paper to "study household second hand smoke exposure and avoidance of SHS in primary school children in southern Taiwan" and then later in the methods section the authors describe a multi-stage sampling approach with sample collected pre and post an intervention i.e. the introduction of the new act. It is recommended that the authors expand the aims of the paper to investigate the impact of public policy in reducing childhood exposure to SHS? The inclusion of this aim is of particular relevance to the area of SHS exposure in children.

2. Little background knowledge was provided by the authors to substantiate the inclusion of the avoidance approach for school children and there are questions to the efficacy of this approach in reducing childhood exposure to SHS. Recommend author includes information in the background section to substantiate this component of the study. This may include information on the efficacy of full bans, partial bans within the home and smoking outside.

3. Survey instruments used in the study are unclear. It is my understanding from the following section of the paper that a parent and child survey was completed. This by the nature of its design is very interesting, however from the information provided i am unable to review the related section of the paper without access to these measures. It is recommended that the reviewers be provided with a copy of the survey instruments to assist with the review.

Minor essential revisions

4. Abbreviations: consistent use of abbreviations such as Second Hand Smoke SHS is recommended throughout the document. It is recommended that the author commit to a standard abbreviation use throughout the document as this is important for new readers to the area.

I am unable to complete a full review of the papers discussion and results section until the above issues with the papers aim and measures

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that i have no competing interests.