Reviewer's report

**Title:** A Feasibility Study of Short Message Service Text Messaging as a Surveillance Tool for Alcohol Consumption and Vehicle for Interventions in University Students

**Version:** 2 **Date:** 13 May 2013

**Reviewer:** Brian Suffoletto

**Reviewer's report:**

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Authors do not provide any point-by-point responses to prior review, which is customary. Please provide, especially given that authors decided to not address multiple issues brought up by the three reviewers.

**Abstract**

2. Abstract is still not clear about where patients form Study II came from. Are they a separate group?

3. Please specify how long each person were asked to provide SMS responses

**Background**

4. Seems very disorganized. Consider reformatting to: PP1: Prior studies examining surveillance of alcohol use over time. PP2: Prior studies using alcohol expenditures to change drinking behavior. PP3: Prior SMS-based tools to collect health data (alcohol) and deliver interventions for behavior change and alcohol use. PP4: Aims of this study.

5. Authors state that the "current paper focuses on undergraduate students" but clearly reports on students and non-students.

6. Aims still seem disorganized and obfuscating. Try: Aim 1: To determine the validity of SMS alcohol consumption reports versus standardized assessment tools. Aim 2: To assess take-up and attrition to SMS. Aim 3: To determine temporal changes in alcohol consumption by day of week and holiday versus non-holiday. Aim 4: To assess the usability and acceptability of an SMS tool through qualitative analysis. Aim 5: To explore the effect of a single message regarding alcohol expenditures on future drinking behavior.

**Methods:**

7. Reorganize into suggested structure above. i.e Aim 1-4 were achieved through a prospective study (Study I). Aim 5 was achieved through Study II.

8. Edits in Methods seem to be rushed and not coherent with original manuscript.

9. Authors need to make absolutely clear. Were the subjects in study 2 different than those in Study I? If not, please explain.
10. Please state exactly what the single SMS message said.

Results

11. Again, very difficult to follow. Suggest organizing into above suggested structure.

Discussion:

12. See above comments. Would place results more firmly in prior literature about (1) understanding drinking patterns over time, (2) intervening with financial feedback, (3) using SMS to collect data and deliver novel ecological interventions.

Figure: No figure describing patient flow in Study I or II was given.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests