Reviewer's report

Title: Alcohol Marketing and Drunkenness among Students in the Philippines: Findings from the Nationally Representative Global School-based Student Health Survey

Version: 1 Date: 28 August 2013

Reviewer: Kerri Coomber

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This study examines how alcohol marketing affects rates of drunkenness in adolescent from the Philippines. It addresses a large gap in the literature; namely research examining predictors of alcohol use in low income nations. This paper then recommends stricter policy and regulation.

Major compulsory revisions

Introduction:

1. While the authors provide a good discussion around the predictors and impact of marketing on adolescent drinking rates, it would be good if an overview of the drinking rates in the Philippines, with a focus on adolescents, were provided. For example, the WHO has some figures on consumption rates for adults. Also, some discussion around the policies and regulations that are already in place in the Philippines regarding adult or adolescent alcohol use, or a comment on the lack of policy/regulation in the Philippines, would improve the introduction.

2. Specific hypotheses at the end of the introduction are also needed.

Methods:

3. I would have liked to have seen more detail regarding the sample and procedure here. For instance, the authors state that ‘…students primarily 11-16 year of age;’ could you please state the number of participants in each of #13, 14, 15 and #16 years, as per your bivariate and multivariate logistic regressions. Please also provide the n and/or percentage of males and females.

4. More detail about the survey procedure is needed: Were the surveys paper-based? Were they completed during school time or did the students complete them at home? Were the students supervised at all during completion? How was parental and student consent obtained?

5. In the measures section, the question assessing drunkenness is framed around one or more times during their life (Table 1). How then do the authors determine drunkenness in the past 30 days as used in the analysis? Please provide more detail about this outcome variable.

6. I noticed that Table 1 refers to weighted percentage, but you have not stated
what you weighted your data by. Please state in your analysis section how you weighted your data.

Results:

7. The results are clearly presented and follow sound logic. Please just state if data weights were used for the logistic regression analyses.

Discussion:

8. I would suggest moving your limitations section to the second last paragraph of your discussion.

9. Be careful about repetition. For instance, there is one sentence in paragraph 5 ‘The timing is critical for new policy initiatives….’ which is repeated almost word for word in paragraph 8 ‘It is clear that the timing is critical…’.

10. I would like to see a paragraph or two discussing your findings regarding the rates of alcohol use and drunkenness in Filipino youth.

11. The discussion would also be strengthened by having a more detailed discussion regarding the effectiveness of youth alcohol marketing bans in the countries that do have them. Also, it would be good to see a more detailed discussion about any whether there are any such bans in low income countries and why these bans are not in place. Lastly, the inclusion of a paragraph or two covering the feasibility, and anticipated difficulties, of introducing stricter policies and regulations in the Philippines would also improve the discussion. Provision of some concrete policy examples may also help in this regard.

Minor revisions

There are some grammatical errors throughout, specifically:

1. Introduction, paragraph 3: this sentence could probably be broken into two sentences.

2. Introduction, paragraph 7: Please don’t start a sentence with ‘And, …’

3. Introduction, paragraph 7: The last three sentences are a bit unclear. Maybe remove the sentence beginning ‘It found that responses…’

4. Results, paragraph 1: ‘….possessing alcohol brand logo…’ should be ‘….possessing items with an alcohol brand logo…’

5. Results, paragraph 2: ‘In Models 2 through 4…’ should read as ‘In Models 2 and 3…’

6. Discussion, paragraph 2: This paragraph is a bit hard to follow. It is difficult to discern when you are talking about your own findings and that of past research. Please revise.

7. Discussion, paragraph 7: Please revise the sentence: ‘The WHO has taken an
important...’. It is a bit unclear as it is currently written.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests