Reviewer’s report

Title: Increases in alcohol consumption in women and elderly groups: Evidence from an epidemiological study

Version: 2 Date: 11 October 2012

Reviewer: Ilana Crome

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have undertaken a complex study which has important implications. In order to demonstrate this more clearly, I suggest that some major revisions which either clarify or extend the findings are necessary.

Background research: It would be valuable to include some American research for this paper since this dominates that work in the field. Researchers such as Dan Blazer and Lit-zy Wu are two examples. Some comparison might be useful.

Terminology: The authors use terms 'glasses' and 'drinks' interchangeably. It would be helpful to quantify alcohol content in a 'glass' or a 'drink'. It is not clear how are these related to each other?

Relevance of adult orientated thresholds: It is important to consider whether the recommended limits for alcohol consumption and the diagnostic categories and instruments used are appropriate for older population. The CAGE and AUDIT were developed in adults. There is considerable debate about the relevance of 'recommended' limits for adults to older age groups.

Range of age bands for over 65s: Perhaps some comments need to be made regarding the time span of the over 65 year age group. If it includes people as old as eg 85, this requires some discussion. There may be variation within a 20 or even 30 year period.

The limitations and implications of the research could be extended.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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