Reviewer's report

Title: Proactive recruitment into cessation support: Feasibility of low-intensity recruitment and acceptability of treatment in smoking parents recruited through primary schools

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Reviewer: Luke Wolfenden

Reviewer's report:

The research examines an issue of public health importance. Smoking cessation interventions are of little value unless smoker use them. Increasing the use of evidence based services therefore represents an important but often overlooked issue in public health research. The manuscript is well written and the use of schools to recruit parents into smoking cessation services is novel. I offer the authors a number of suggestions to improve the manuscript

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The aims of the study are not precisely written. I assume that ‘feasibility’ in this aim refers to the reach of a proactive mailing in registering parents to receive proactive cessation support by phone or self help materials. The second could also be expressed in a way which more accurately reflects the measures and experimental comparisons used to address it.

2. Please provide evidence regarding the effectiveness of print materials like an untailored brochure in increasing smoking cessation. My understanding was that untailored brochures are ineffective. If this is the case, why would you examine strategies to recruit parents into an ineffective intervention and what use is information about the acceptability of such intervention given that they offer little public health value even if they are cheap to disseminate.

3. Presumably the study information indicated that parents would be randomly allocated to receive a brochure or telephone support. Therefore parents who were interested in only the brochure, only the telephone support or either would have responded to the print invitation. If this is the case, acceptability measures may represented an under-estimate as the random assignment to groups did not consider parent preferences regarding modality.

4. I was surprised that information regarding cessation or quit attempts was not reported in the experimental comparisons between groups. While participant perceptions regarding how helpful the support received was to them is interesting, unless the intervention is effective in increasing smoking cessation it has limited value from a public health perspective. However, if the trial is reported as an RCT then it should ensure compliance with CONSORT

5. Were all 35,000 letters distributed to parents by schools or were some never sent home with children? Also do you have any data regarding the acceptability
of the recruitment methods to parents, teachers and school staff. This would be interesting in order to assess the viability of this approach to recruiting parents into cessation services. Also while there is an extended discussion of the recruitment rate (500 parents from 35,000 mailings) in the discussion it is not presented in the results section. I had thought that this was a key finding pertaining to aim 1 of the paper and was expected to see the result under a subheading in the results as well as an extended discussion on the findings.

6. Were parents informed at the time of recruitment that they would receive 100euro for participation and completion of data collection procedures. How would this have impacted on the findings?

7. It does not appear though the analysis accounts for school level clustering.

**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 that I have no competing interests'