Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Predictors of hazardous drinking, tobacco smoking and physical inactivity in apprentices of vocational schools

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 5 March 2013

**Reviewer:** Inga Dora Sigfusdottir

**Reviewer’s report:**

Review: Predictors of hazardous drinking, tobacco smoking and physical inactivity in apprentices of vocational schools.

Title:
Is clear and in line with the paper

Abstract:

**Major Compulsory Revisions:**
1. The first paragraph “Little is known about health risk behaviors in adolescents and young adults” is a very strong claim since there is a vast amount of research published on the subject.

Introduction:
This chapter should review existing literature more thoroughly and link the discussion on prior work more clearly to the purpose of the current study.

The authors define the research question clearly in the last paragraph.

**Major Compulsory Revisions:**
1. “Tobacco smoking and physical inactivity is steadily increasing…” If there is another research to back this statement up the authors should mention it in order to generalize the statement. If not then they should mention the country that this research applies to.

2. Research among adolescents and young adults not attending any school between the age of 16 and 20 should be listed.

3. “In a recent survey (8)…” When the authors mention the smoking prevalence and hazardous drinking % is that in comparison to the general population survey mentioned?

4. “In a recent survey (8)…” Why do the authors feel that analyzing two health risk factors is a limitation for the survey?

5. In this chapter the authors should include more information on physical activity and the importance of looking at three health risk behaviors, especially in regard to comment 4 above.

**Minor Essential Revisions:**
1. When speaking of hazardous drinking it would be helpful to define the term.
2. In the research question posed by the authors it would be good to include the age of the sample since the data was analyzed by age.

Methods:
Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. Looking at the country of birth for parents is an indication of migration, however it is worth to note that parents might have been born elsewhere but lived their whole life in Switzerland and this is not a certain indication of a migration background for participants.

2. Why is an individual who exercises less than 2 hours a week outside school considered physically inactive? This mark should rather be 1 hour 30 minutes. WHO recommends 150 minutes and 1 hour 45 minutes added to 45 minutes (minimum school requirement) equals 150 minutes of VPA. The authors should be clear here as to why this cut-off point is used?

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. Instruments: when assessing the educational attainment, c) is used twice (extended secondary school and technical or high school).

Discretionary Revisions:
1. Since the sample was only collected in Switzerland it is not necessary to mention Germany in the Sample recruitment process.

Results:
Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. Predictors of hazardous drinking: Was there no difference in prevalence between age groups?

2. Predictors of tobacco smoking: Was there no significant difference in tobacco smoking prevalence between females and males?

Discussion:
Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. In the first paragraph three main findings are summarized. These findings are not all accounted for in the results section of the paper. The authors should correct this

2. Limitations of the study should be further outlined and revised. I do not agree that a main limitation to the study is due to the fact that data were not collected from a representative survey of all apprentices. This is only a limitation if the goal of the study was to generalize the results for all apprentices attending vocational school in Switzerland.

3. Why should the prevalence of a single risk factor be interpreted with caution?

Minor Essential Revisions:
Discretionary Revisions:

1. In the last paragraph the authors speak of few studies that examine the acceptance and effectiveness of intervention that support smoking cessation or decrease hazardous drinking among apprentices. Are these interventions different from other interventions among the same age group? I think it would be helpful to address this in the discussion.

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

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

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