Author's response to reviews

Title: The odd man out in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding the tobacco use behavior in Madagascar

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer #1
Title: The odd man out in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding the tobacco use behavior in Madagascar

Comment
Since the authors have responded to my comments in an adequate fashion, I have no further comments at this point

Response
Thank you

Comment
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Response
Thank you

Comment
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Response
Thank you.

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

Thank you.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests
Reviewer #2

Title: The odd man out in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding the tobacco use behavior in Madagascar

Comment

First, I want to thank the authors to profoundly respond to the previous comments. The manuscript has improved compared with the previous version.

Response

Thank you.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Discussion:

Comment

2nd paragraph – 16th line: the authors refer to the tax rate in Madagascar which is higher compared with the recommended tax rate and also the highest of the SSA countries. Nevertheless, Madagascar has the highest rates of tobacco use and the authors ask therefore more investigation about the impact of price policy on tobacco use. For me, this result seems very logical: the government sees the burden of tobacco use in the country and as reaction raises the tax rate. As this study is cross-sectional, no causality can be studied. So in countries with less smoking, policy may be less necessary and therefore weaker. This does not mean that a weak policy results in low smoking rates. The same here: in countries with a high smoking rate, policy may be stronger and stricter to battle the smoking epidemic. This does not mean that a strong
policy results in a higher smoking rate. To investigate the causality, longitudinal research is needed.

**Response**

We agree with the reviewer and have included the need for “longitudinal research into causal relationship between price of tobacco products and tobacco use”.

**Comment**

6th paragraph -8th line: Nevertheless, the huge difference in the rate of smoking among married males … : In table 2, there is no difference in smoking between married and unmarried males. There is a significant difference in dual use between married and unmarried males. So, I would refer here to the dual use of which smoking is part of.

**Response**

We corrected the sentence as:

  Nevertheless, the significant difference in the rate of dual use between married and unmarried males indicates that a larger percentage of the female population in Madagascar were exposed to secondhand smoke (SHS)

**Comment**

Table 1: the total % (for example males: 28.5% smoking + 24.60% SLT + 4.30 dual use = 47.4% all tobacco use while in table is 48.9%) does not count together in the last column, but the N do. How come? Is the data weighted? If so, indicate this in the table.
Response

The data as presented in the table is consistent. For example, male smoking (28.5) + SLT (24.6)=53.1 from which you deduct the dual use 4.3 to arrive at the total 48.9. This is because, by construction, smoking and smokeless are not mutually exclusive categories here. Because smoking here includes all those who smoked and some who smoked and chewed. Similarly SLT included all those who used SLTs and some who used both SLT and smoking. Dual include all those who smoked and used SLT. In other words, smoking + SLT – dual use will add up to the total. We have now added a footnote under table 1 to clarify this point.

Prevalence for smoked and smokeless tobacco use is not mutually exclusive. Therefore, the totals in the last two columns are summations of the corresponding smoked and SLT percentages minus dual use.

Minor Essential Revisions

Methods:

Comment

2nd paragraph – 4th line: I think it would be better to include the response rate of the tobacco questions to the next paragraph where you talk about the tobacco questions.

Response

We moved that towards the end of the next paragraph

Comment

2nd paragraph – 4th line: was dual use asked separately as a question, or did you compute this based on the smoking and smokeless tobacco use questions. Now it seems that you have asked about: smoking, smokeless tobacco use and again asked about dual use.
Response

Dual use was not asked separately. We computed it based on smoking and smokeless use status.

We changed the sentence as

Approximately 96% of females aged 15-49 years (n=17,375) and 93% of males aged 15-59 years (n=8,586) provided information on their current use of tobacco products, which include smoked and smokeless tobacco products

Comment

2nd paragraph – last line: Was this study (analyses on secondary data) approved by the review board or was the original DHS study approved by the review board?

Response

We intend to say that our study, which is the analysis of the DHS, was approved by the IRB of East Tennessee State University. We have revised the sentence as

This study, which is analyses of the DHS data, was approved by the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University.

Comment

Figure 1a - b: indicate that the data is from the DHS study.

Response

We included the nomenclature of the study in the figure legends. We made the following changes:
“Figure 1a: Tobacco use among adult males in Sub-Saharan African countries, Demographic Health Survey, 2005-2010”

“Figure 1b: Tobacco use among adult females in Sub-Saharan African countries, Demographic Health Survey, 2005-2010”

Comment

Figure 1a: under the table: No information was available for adult tobacco use … Include here ‘male’ adult tobacco use.

Response

See above.

Discretionary Revisions

Methods:

Comment

5th paragraph – first line: I think it is more clear to say: ‘In this study, the dependent variable (y) has 4 outcome categories (J) namely, no tobacco use (hereafter ‘non’ and used as base category (b)), …”

Response

It has been corrected as suggested

Results:
6th paragraph – 5th line: put ‘respectively’ after the first sentence.

Response

We have revised the paper as suggested.

Comment

8th paragraph – 11th line: … agriculture had a higher relative risk of dual use of tobacco products. Include after products: ‘compared with unemployed males’.

Response

We have revised the manuscript as suggested.

Comment

6th paragraph – last sentence: the authors can also include children besides nonsmoking married females.

Response

We have revised the paper as suggested.

Minor issues not for publication:

Background:

Comment

2nd paragraph – 10th line: Therefore, this study … of high rates of prevalence of tobacco use than other SSA countries. I would change ‘than other’ to ‘compared with’.

Response

We have revised the paper as suggested.
Comment

3th paragraph – 2nd line: The presence of (include here: the) tobacco industry …

Response

We have revised the manuscript as suggested.

Methods:

Comment

6th paragraph – 3th line: put smoked, SLT and dual use between brackets.

Response

We have revised the manuscript as suggested.

Comment

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

Response

Thank you.

Comment

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Response

Thank you.
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.

Reviewer #3

Reviewer's report

Title: The odd man out in Sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding the tobacco use behavior in Madagascar

Comment

The authors should be commended for the amount of work they have done to revise the manuscript.

Response

Thank you.

Comment

Yet I have one concern about the extreme estimates of odds ratios and their 95% confidence intervals (see page 15, last para). In my view it's not sufficient to argue that 'different sample size' is the cause, rather we want to see better fitted models through some manipulation of variables. The authors have run a multinomial model with n=18 respondents (dual use) which is extremely under-powered and the results are not interpretable. I believe that the correlates of 'dual use' are misleading in both males and females with modeling flaws and should not be
presented in its current form in Table 2. One option would be to drop them from Table 3 or the author may wish to rerun the model of dual use in males [I don't think they can run a good model in female with n=18]; in that case, they need to regroup occupation category to derive meaningful estimates of odds ratios.

Response

We agree with the reviewer. As such, we have deleted the analyses of females for “dual use” from Table 2 and reported the results for only males. Accordingly, we have revised the entire paper, taking into consideration this modification.

Comment

As a minor issue, I can't see how the readers will be benefitted from the technical details of the mathematical model, which has a typo and one item (omega) is unexplained.

Response

Thank you for the suggestion. We would like to respectfully retain the technical details of the model. The typo has been corrected.

Comment

Hope this helps in improving the quality of the statistical analysis of the results.

Response

Thank you.