Reviewer's report

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

Version: 4 Date: 31 July 2013

Reviewer: Anne Hublet

Reviewer's report:

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

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Discussion:

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.

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.

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.

Minor Essential Revisions

Methods:

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.

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.

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?

Figure 1a - b: indicate that the data is from the DHS study.
Figure 1a: under the table: No information was available for adult tobacco use … Include here ‘male’ adult tobacco use.

Discretionary Revisions

Methods:
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)), …

Results:
6th paragraph – 5th line: put ‘respectively’ after the first sentence.
8th paragraph – 11th line: … agriculture had a higher relative risk of dual use of tobacco products. Include after products: ‘compared with unemployed males’.

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

Minor issues not for publication:

Background:
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’.

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

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

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.