Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and Factors Determining Psycho-active Substance (PAS) use among Hawassa University Undergraduate Students, Hawassa, Ethiopia

Version: 2  Date: 11 June 2014

Reviewer: Marie-Pierre Tavolacci

Reviewer's report:

-The authors used a WHO model students substance use core questionnaire to collect information on the use of different PASs: it is well to use a standardized questionnaire

Major compulsory revisions

Introduction

-The first sentence need references: « Psycho Active Substance (PAS) use is becoming well known for compromising the health status and also claiming the death of millions’ life every year ». 

-The aim of the study was to establish prevalence of PASs and their determinants among undergraduate students of Hawassa University. A recent study published in BMC Public Health (Ref 6) was about the same topic: « Psychoactive substances use and associated factors among Axum university students, Axum Town, North Ethiopia »: what are the differences with the study of the authors? 

-Reference about the death caused by PAS should be more recent than Reference 2 (2003)

-Substances like alcohol and khat were reported to be abused by 84% and 54% of students of one Kenya private university respectively [6-8] but Reference 6 refered to a study in Ethiopia and Ref 7 in Nigeria

Methods

-The authors did not indicate the precision they chose to calculate the sample size: The sample size needed in surveys depends upon the precision of estimates desired. 

-The authors used 22% as prevalence of substance use but is it a lifetime or a current use?

Definitions used by the authors were: « Lifetime substance use in this study refers to respondents who admitted to having ever used at least one of the substances listed in the questionnaire. » « ‘Current prevalence’ denotes proportion of students who used substance within 30 days preceding the study. »
However in the tables of results we found also the consumption in the past 12 months that it was not indicate in the methods.

« Bivariate analysis was done and variables with p-value less than 0.05 were included in the multiple logistic regression analysis » : it is usually include p-value less than 0.20 in the logistic regression

Results

-The authors have to standardize the presentation of numbers in the results : either 0, 1, 2 or 3 numbers after the point were presented in the text or in tables.

Few sentences were redundant with results in table 5 « Those students who reported that their family use PAS were more likely to use PASU in the past year as compared to those students whose family didn’t use PAS (adjusted OR = 2.745, 95% CI = 1.678-4.490)

-The table 1 was not clear and some results were wrong : for exemple :
  • Age 20-24 total : 468/586 = 79.8% and not 69.2% as indicated ;
  • 419 total of male for the age (total male was 479) ;
  • 81.43% proportion of male (for th 3 last categories) : it was 81.7% ;
  • no percentage were indicated for the total of father’s educationnal level
  • In the table 2 , why the total exceeded 100% (abuses PAS) or were inferior to 100% (drunk alcohol) ?

-Why were not all the items presented in the table 5 as in the table 6 ?

Discussion

-Male students are a large proportion of the students (81.7%), is it representive of the students or is it surestimate ?

There were too many results in the discussion : only the main results must be presented and discussed

Authors argued « This deference may be linked to the study time differences, culture.. » but the study was conducted in 2011 and the reference 6 is a study conducted in Ethiopia and in 2012 : then in the same country and only one year after the study of the authors

Minor essential revisions

-« Revelin » was first cited in the BMJ in 2000 by Plant M (before Reference 15).

-Presentation of the references must to be reviewed : Initial of the First name is required and not the whole first name

Level of interest:An article of limited interest
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