Reviewer’s report

Title: An exploratory study of the risk influences for cigarette smoking among Southern Nigerian youth

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Reviewer: Oluwakemi O Odukoya

Reviewer’s report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? YES
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? NO
3. Are the data sound? NO
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? YES
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? NO
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? YES
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? YES
9. Is the writing acceptable? YES

Reviewer’s comments

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVIONS:

1. Background:
   Paragraph 1 line 7: Authors should please compare like with like. The study cited in reference 4 was conducted in 2007 in the North-Eastern parts of Nigeria. While reference 5 appears to be national estimates from 2002. Why do the authors choose to use outdated national estimates when there are more recent and precise national surveys on tobacco use that have been conducted in Nigeria? For instance the 2008 NDHS or 2012 GATS reports?

   Line 9: ……..adults in Nigeria is on the increase…….: The authors have failed to justify this increasing trend with facts and figures. Figures from one relatively high study doesn’t justify an increase……the authors will need to provide figures at different time frames showing an increasing trend before such a statement may be justified.

   Study design: While I am of the opinion that indeed a qualitative design is best suited to answer this research question, I disagree with the authors choice of specific qualitative methods. Authors desired to explore the socio-cultural issues
around tobacco use in southern Nigeria on cigarette smoking. In seeking to do this, they conducted 24 individual interviews and only one small and inappropriate FGD. Do the authors really think that collecting a whole lot of individual information (personal opinions) is the best way to collect data on cultural issues (cultural issues tend to be group specific and not individualized)? Since we are interested in socio-cultural issues, the authors might want to collect some more information but using more focus group discussions, which tend to be more useful for information of this nature rather than a collection of personal interviews as they have done. Their current approach might introduce some bias and elicit a possibly distorted view of the issues explored.

I suggest that the authors go back to the field and collect some more information but this time using several FGD’s among relatively homogenous groups of people who will provide a rich discussion on the social and cultural issues surrounding tobacco use within their communities.

Separate FGD’s among young smokers within school, young smokers out of school, political analysts, community leaders etc should be carried out. Each FGD should have people that hail from similar communities and not a mix of ethnically diverse individuals. Nigeria is indeed very ethnically diverse.

Data collection: One FGD with only three people is unacceptable. FGD’s should have at least 6-10 participants. When the authors use the term community leaders? Which specific communities are they referring to?

Who conducted the interviews and FGD, when and where did each one take place?

MINOR REVISIONS

Study title: The main focus of this study is to explore the socio-cultural risk influences for cigarette smoking in southern Nigeria. I think this should be reflected in the title. The title should therefore read” An exploratory study of the socio-cultural risk influences for cigarette smoking…..

Participants and setting: Line 6: which exact community did the “community members” hail from?

Where exactly in southern Nigeria was the study conducted? Was it within the community of each participant? Where was the FGD conducted? Any measures to ensure that these interviews and discussions were free of bias?

Line 13: This is the first mention of students in this study. And it is occurring firstly as “other students” so who were the prior students? Also, at what point did the authors decide that they wanted to use students as their respondents and why?

Results

Cultural environment: Line 2: the use of the term “prevalent” might not be adequate. One person’s personal opinion is not enough to justify the statement that “in southern Nigeria, the use of tobacco products for traditional ceremonies is prevalent”
Please note that you should use a uniform font size in your writings. Paragraph 2 lines 4 and 5.

Please include the ages of the young smokers in your narrative excerpts.

Policy environment

It might not be entirely true to say that the 1990 Tobacco Control Act is non-operational in Nigeria. Some parts of the Act are actually being enforced. For example, health warning labels and advert bans on Television. The 1990 Act however makes no provisions for smoke-free public places and therefore should not be judged based on that as the authors are suggesting. So the issue is that the Act of 1990 is not comprehensive and all efforts should be made to pass a more comprehensive anti-tobacco law i.e. the Nigeria tobacco control bill. This is a main policy issue regarding tobacco control in Nigeria and should have been explored in some more detail by the authors.

Influence of tobacco companies:

Line 3 …..Many respondents say that they still see tobacco adverts on billboards…… the use of the term “Many respondents” is surprising and possibly contradictory. 

In summary, I’d like to commend the efforts of the authors in deciding to choose such a relevant topic.

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

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.