Reviewer's report

Title: Adherence to treatment to help quit smoking: effects of task performance and coping with withdrawal symptoms

Version: 3  Date: 2 June 2014

Reviewer: Francesco Pistelli

Reviewer's report:

General comment
Following the comments from the reviewers, the paper has partly improved. However, in the opinion of this reviewer some major concerns remain.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. The aim of the study (both in the abstract and in the text) should be better formulated. The study aims to assess predictors of continuous abstinence of an assisted smoking cessation program rather than to "analyze differences ..".
2. In the section "Methods" it should be reported how the compliance to the pharmacological therapy was defined (for example, number (%) of days assuming pharmacotherapy with respect to the prescribed dose).
3. In the section "Methods" it should be reported how relapse was defined (for example, only lips, at least a cigarette per day, smoking cigarettes some days a week).
4. In the section "Methods" it should be reported the reference for follow-up visits "at 3, 6, 12 months" (for example, from quit day, from baseline visit). Since the abstinence could start differently from baseline among the participants, having set the baseline visit as reference for follow-up might have affected continuous abstinence rates. Difference between continuous vs. point prevalence should be clarified in "Results" section and discussed in "Discussion" section.
5. According to table 1, all the n=125 study subjects attended all the follow-up visits, while usually the smoking cessation studies are characterized by high lost-to-follow-up rates. This very surprising result should be clarified and discussed.
6. The subheading "Variables related to cigarette smoking" of the "Results" section, and the second paragraph of the "Discussion" section should be rephrased. The term "other drug addiction" should be replaced by "use of alcohol and/or tranquilizers", since "dependence on other substance" was an exclusion criterion.
7. Section "Discussion", paragraph 3, "This is a novel and valuable finding which suggests an alternative solution that can reduce health costs related to quitting programs". This statement is unclear and not supported by the presented results.
8. Section "Discussion", paragraph 6, "Our results are contradictories but can be
interpreted in the sense that our participants were highly motivated by what
would be necessary to ask the differences in these variables in smokers with
high and low motivation for change''. This statement is unclear.

9. Major conclusions should be the same both in the abstract and in the text of
the paper. In the conclusions of the text it should be speculated how the
observed results might be used to improve the assisted smoking cessation
programs.

10. English language needs to be extensively improved, see for example:
subheading “Participants”, lines 1-3. Subheading “Procedure”, lines 7-8 (“The
medication ..”). Subheading “Instruments”, paragraph “CWSI”, lines 8-9 (“For
computer ...”).

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Add subheading "Conclusions" to the abstract.
2. Abstract, line 6. Add "variables" before "related".
3. Abstract, line 8. Replace "fagerström" with "Fagerström"
4. Abstract, line 12. Replace "estimaded" with "estimated".
5. Abstract, line 20. Replace "The outcome measure was treatment status" with
"The outcome measure was smoking status".
6. Results, subheading "abstinence rates". Replace "1-moth" with "1-month".
7. Results, subheading "Socio-demographic variables". Replece "abstinence
duration were" with "abstinence duration was"
8. Discussion, paragraph 7. Translate "nivel alto de motivacion".

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests