Reviewer's report

Title: Maintaining relevance: An evaluation of health message sponsorship at Australian community sport and arts events

Version: 3 Date: 22 September 2014

Reviewer: Ben Smith

Reviewer's report:

The authors have given a number of reasonable responses to the comments from the reviewers, and the modifications undertaken have strengthened the manuscript.

Major compulsory revisions

1. The major outstanding issue is the continued combination of unprompted and prompted recall of sponsorship messages into a single variable. The authors have pointed out that prompted recall was measured using the preferred approach of inviting respondents to select the sponsorship message from a list of options. But as they acknowledge, prompted and unprompted recall access different cognitive processes, and because of this it is difficult to describe what the awareness variable is showing. There seem to be two options here. One is to provide a much stronger justification, with supporting evidence, for the combination of prompted and unprompted recall into a single variable. The other is to remove from the analysis those interview respondents who only had prompted recall, leaving only those with unprompted recall. The description of study respondents given at the beginning of the Results section suggests that this will still give a sample of over 1500.

The other comments to offer address minor issues.

Minor essential revisions

2. In the Abstract, the first sentence of the Results should clarify that the percentages for comprehension and acceptance are of those with message awareness.

3. Under Instrumentation, “promoted” should be corrected to “prompted” awareness.

4. Removal of the findings concerning ‘action’ has not detracted from the manuscript, but there are still a number of sentences that refer to this aspect of the study. These include the last sentence in the Instrumentation sub-section, the second sentence under Data Analysis, and the last paragraph of the Results section.

5. In the first paragraph of the Discussion, there is a sentence beginning “Similar to the earlier research…” which suggests that both the 1992-2002 and
2008-2013 sponsorship initiatives of Healthway were supported by broader media campaigns. This is confusing because in the final paragraph of the Background it is indicated that the earlier sponsorship initiatives were not aligned with media campaigns.

6. The paragraph before Limitations is hard to follow in places. In the third line it would add clarity to say “high levels of intention were elicited”. The sentence beginning “Framing smoking or illicit drug messages…” required rereading a few times, and could be edited for clarity.

7. In the first line of the Limitations section it should read “consideration of” rather than “for”.

8. Finally, the Conclusions would be less repetitive if the first and last sentences were removed.

**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 I have no competing interests.