Reviewer's report

Title: Work stress and alcohol consumption among adolescents: moderation by family and peers

Version: 2 Date: 18 September 2014

Reviewer: Alan Feingold

Reviewer's report:

This research has a mix of strengths and weaknesses. On the plus side, it addresses the interesting question of whether social support from family and peers acts as a buffer against the effects of work-related stress on alcohol behavior in adolescents. Their introduction provides a good rationale for the study and the MTF is an excellent large dataset for conducting a secondary analysis of data on factors that contribute to alcohol abuse.

It is mainly methodological issues that dampen my enthusiasm for this work.

1. I don't think that variables like "hours worked" or "money earned" are meaningful or even logical indicators of "stress." Such measures could be associated with many factors other than stress that were not controlled and could be confounded with the moderation of stress by family and peer influences. It would make more sense to refer to the set of variable as "work influences" rather than "stress" and to conduct a separate analysis on each predictor (e.g., work satisfaction).

2. The authors do not provide a rationale for the dichotomization of the moderators and used different and arbitrary cutoff points to create the binary variables. Continuous variables should be treated as such and interactions analyzed by adding the cross-products of the predictors and the moderators in the models.

3. The odds ratio (OR) is not the same thing as the odds, and the authors should not confuse the two.

4. The alcohol measures based on the number of times the respondent consumed 5 or more drinks at a time refers to an important construct known as "heavy episodic drinking," It should be analyzed as a variable in its own right.

I think that a revision that addresses these concerns would be worthy of publication but would require a complete reanalysis of the data.

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.