Reviewer's report

Title: The impact of televised tobacco control advertising content on campaign recall: Evidence from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) United Kingdom Survey

Version: 3
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Reviewer: Gera Nagelhout

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This is a very nice study that examines the impact of increased exposure to tobacco control advertising with different types of emotive content on rates and durations of self-reported recall. Survey data from the ITC UK Project are merged with data about per capita exposure to government television tobacco control ads. This is a creative idea that leads to interesting results. A large limitation of the study is that campaign recall is the only outcome measure and not smoking behavior. The authors describe this limitation openly in the discussion section, where they state that their results do not necessarily translate to increased smoking cessation, behavior change or improvements in other outcome measures.

I have only a few minor comments:

1. Background – first paragraph: The authors describe that two other studies have examined the impact of campaign content on recall among adults. Perhaps the authors should explain more about these studies and what is missing from them, so it becomes clear why another study is needed.

2. Methods – survey methodology: Is it correct that respondents who reported to have successfully discontinued smoking in two consecutive surveys are no longer recontacted in ITC UK?

3. Methods – campaign exposure: Campaigns were categorized by two researchers as having either positive or negative emotional content. It would be good to report the inter-coder reliability.

4. Methods – campaign exposure: It is unclear to me what the authors mean with “these figures included campaigns run by charities which were not part of our original dataset.”

5. References - #24: Please check whether reference 24 is correct (title and page numbers).

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 am part of the ITC research project and I have published with Geoffrey Fong and Ann McNeill.