Reviewer’s report

Title: Lower health literacy predicts smoking relapse among racially/ethnically diverse smokers with low socioeconomic status

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Reviewer: Pallav Pokhrel

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well-written manuscript on a topic on which relatively little research has been done. Hence the research question examined is of significance. There are some concerns however.

Major revisions

1. It is not clear why risk perceptions and baseline motivation to quit were not adjusted for to determine the unique association between health literacy and cessation. A clarification may be necessary. Additional analyses in this regard would be desirable. If after adjusting for risk perceptions and motivation to quit, health literacy doesn't have a significant effect on cessation, could the two variables potentially be mediators worth testing in future research?

2. It would help the reader if health literacy is defined at the very outset and distinguished from poor knowledge of smoking risks

3. It would help the reader if the possible mechanisms that are likely to link health literacy to smoking cessation are discussed in the introduction. For example, how may be the ability to process health information be related to smoking cessation? Is increased health literacy linked with better information processing ability and/or ability to learn skills necessary to achieve cessation?

4. Were steps taken to monitor the quality of the counseling sessions? Was the quality same across high and low literacy groups?

5. More information on the validity of REALM as a health literacy assessment tool would be desirable. It seems to me that pronunciations may be influenced by several personal characteristics other than literacy (e.g., ability to speak well).

6. In regard to the regression analysis, please provide ORs corresponding to the covariates as well.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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