Reviewer's report

Title: The number and distribution of non-food serving pubs and bars: a survey from the North West of England

Version: 1 Date: 5 August 2005

Reviewer: Julia Critchley

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an important and generally well-written paper, demonstrating that the proposed English partial smoking ban in pubs and bars will not be effective in protecting the health of bar staff and non-smoking customers, and may also increase inequalities in active and passive smoking.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Background page 3, 3rd para. Delete "...with all but the remainder of estimates within the 10-30% range" - as this is not clear (the sentence is too long), and in any case does not add to the argument.

Methods page 4. Can the structured questionnaire used be made available to readers, perhaps as an electronic attachment, on the author’s website, or on request from the authors?

Methods page 4 - Please state how many Location Authorities there are in total in the North West, so the reader can calculate what proportion of LAs agreed to take part.

Methods page 4 "IMD" - please state what this acronym refers to for the general reader

Page 4 first sentence. I found this difficult to read. Suggest rewriting as "...and variations in this proportion by deprivation level of the local area

Table 1 - Please explain the acronym IMD-2004 (possibly as a footnote). I also think it would be helpful to add a column reporting a p value e.g. from chi-squared test for trend across the deprivation quintiles.

Figures 1 and 2 - Can you add error bars to display the 95% CI around each IMD deprivation quintile for each column of the figures?

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Abstract Results section - suggest refer to deprivation quintiles as (4 and 5) rather than (4/5) etc
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

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