Title: Gender differentials in the evolution of cigarette smoking habits in a general European adult population from 1993-2003

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report
Title: Gender differentials in the evolution of cigarette smoking habits in a general European adult population from 1993-2003

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Reviewer: Paul Hewson

Reviewer's report:
General
Some of the points raised in earlier reviews have been addressed

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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)

I still feel that the linear trends with age are inappropriate and make the paper look unprofessional. It is very clear that at least one of the subgroups has a very strong, non-linear pattern.

RESPONSE: We agree that the never smoking subgroup may have a slight non-linear pattern with age for men (Figure 2, top left panel). On the other hand, modelling the latter pattern linearly is a reasonable approximation because the degree of potential nonlinearity does not appear to be very large. As a compromise to settle this issue, we have omitted the linear trend fits and the corresponding CB’s from the top panels of Figure 2. Accordingly, the first sentence of the Age Effects subsection now reads: “Gender-specific age effects over all survey years combined for the three cigarette smoking subgroup prevalences were investigated with stratified histograms, and the mean ages at smoking initiation were investigated using simple linear regression models and graphs with 95% CB similar to those described above for the trends by calendar year analyses.” Likewise, we have omitted mention of the corresponding linear trend p-values from the Results and the top panels of Figure 2, and changed the Figure 2 legend accordingly.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions
Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests