Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and determinants of adolescent tobacco smoking in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Version: 1 Date: 31 January 2007

Reviewer: Alan Flisher

Reviewer's report:

General

This paper, which reports data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, makes an important contribution in terms of filling an important gap in the local database about the prevalence of tobacco use and attitudes towards and exposure to tobacco advertisements. There are however a number of aspects of the paper that, if addressed, will increase the quality of the paper. I offer the following comments in the hope that the authors will make some changes in the paper, thus making a good paper even better.

1) The introduction is very skimpy indeed. It would have been good to hear if there had been any previous studies in Ethiopia that addressed tobacco use. Some information about what had been done elsewhere on the continent would also have been useful. The authors might have found two reviews by Townsend et al. helpful; one was entitled "A systematic literature review of tobacco use by adults aged 15 years and older in Sub-Saharan Africa" and was published in a recent issue of the journal Drug and Alcohol Dependence, while the other was entitled "A systematic review of tobacco use among Sub-Saharan African youth" and was published in a recent issue of the Journal of Substance Use.

2) There are several points of format that need to be addressed; for example, there are several typos (e.g. page 3. second line from the bottom); the tense should be past tense throughout; and sentences start with digits.

3) So far as data analysis is concerned, it should be stated whether the data were weighted the design effect taken into account (which presumably they were since STATA was used). Also, why did the authors restrict themselves to bivariate analyses? Surely some basic multivariate analyses would have been appropriate?

4) In the results section, there is no mention made of the data reported n Tables 2 and 3; there should have been some mention of the tables in the text at the very least and also some actual results from these tables provided.

5) The discussion would have benefited from being situated in the context of the more recent data from the continent and elsewhere. The studies that were included for comparative purposes seem to have been selected in a fairly arbitrary manner. The reviews that I mentioned at the beginning of this report may have been useful in this regard.

6) In the first sentence of the second paragraph of the discussion it is suggested that anti-tobacco messages among young people are effective in preventing tobacco use, on the basis of an association between believing that smoking was harmful to health and not smoking. There are a number of other explanations for this finding which the authors should at least mention.

7) In Table 1, it would have been helpful to see the prevalence rates for each "characteristic" stratified by smoking status. In Tables 2 and 3, the differences between the characteristics of the levels should have been examined statistically.

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests.