Reviewer's report

Title: Health impacts of exposure to second hand smoke (SHS) amongst a highly exposed workforce: survey of London casino workers

Version: 1 Date: 15 June 2007

Reviewer: Stanton Glantz

Reviewer's report:

General

While the general approach in the paper is reasonable, the presentation needs improvement (see below).

---

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

---

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

---

1. Page 3, para 1: This sentence should be reworded to make it clear that these fears of loss of business have not been supported by actual experience. The paper by Scollo, et al (Tobacco Control 2003;12:13-20) would be a good reference to support this statement.

2. Page 3, para 2: What is the actual status of the English law? Saying casinos "were thought" not to be included is not clear.

3. Page 6, para 2: How were multiple responders identified, given that the survey was anonymous?

4. The tests of significance in Table 2 seem to have been done with chi-square, which does not test dose-response. The test that was used needs to be specified and the text amended appropriately with regard to statements of dose-response.

5. Page 6, bottom: Can you say anything about how the responders and nonresponders differed using overall statistics for union members?

6. Page 8, para 3: It is not clear what "Other than the Wisconsin study ..." means.

7. The recent study of bar workers in Scotland needs to be integrated into the paper (Menzies et al, Respiratory Symptoms, Pulmonary Function, and Markers of Inflammation Among Bar Workers Before and After a Legislative Ban on Smoking in Public Places JAMA. 2006;296:1742-1748 ).

8. References 12 and 13 should be supplemented with the two recent major consensus documents on this subject: the 2005 California Environmental Protection Agency and 2006 US Surgeon General reports on secondhand smoke and health.

9. The tables need to be cleaned up:

   It is not clear what the numbers in parenthesis are. They appear to be percentages, but this should be stated. Be consistent in the number of decimal places reported.

   The headings on the tables should be "sensory OR irritation" symptoms.

   Table 3:

   Use "n" rather than "No" to mean the number. This reader initially read "No" as meaning "no symptoms," which was confusing.
Be consistent in formatting to the table to consistently put the reference condition (OR=1.00) as the first entry in each subsection of the table.

Make it clear that the OR’s for hours worked is per hour worked (if that is what it is).

Use words to identify the variables, not the SPSS variable names.

It is not clear how the multivariate analysis is done, particularly what variables are controlled for. Do the results in this table reflect the results of a single multivariate analysis? Are these all the variables that were included in the equation?

It is not clear what all the numbers in Table 4 are. For example, for New York bar workers, n=24, yet the numbers which appear to be number of respondents are around 60. This table would be best done to just report percentages in the body of the table with the sample sizes at the top (as they are). The results of the Scottish study (noted above) need to be included.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

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