Reviewer's report

Title: Tobacco Use Among Students Aged 13-15 Years in Greece: The GYTS Project

Version: 1 Date: 23 October 2006

Reviewer: Esteve Fernandez

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-written paper aimed at analyzing the prevalence of smoking and of other characteristics of smoking consumption and attitudes among middle-school students in Greece. The results of this descriptive cross-sectional study are of interest to characterize the epidemic of tobacco smoking in Greece, where scarce data have been made available.

Some minor points follow:

1. The wording of the objective has to be improved both in the Abstract and at the end of the Introduction. They should read equally. The goal of the investigation was not to "analyze the information collected from the GYTS..." but to analyze the prevalence of smoking among middle-school students and to describe the prevalence of different indicators of smoking consumption (such as lifetime cigarette, age of initiation....)

2. Please provide 95% confidence intervals in the Abstract and narrative description of results.

3. The first half of the 4th paragraph is unnecessary (until ref. 16)

4. The authors should discuss in-depth the limitations of their study design: further discussion of the potential selection bias induced by non-response, although low, is necessary. Do the pupils not attending the school or not willing to respond the questionnaire have different characteristics than those who responded? Were all the responses valid? (it is very common to get invalid responses from self-responded questionnaires in young people)

5. Discussion on the potential information bias due to underreporting of smoking in this population should improve the manuscript. Questionnaires are a valid method to assess tobacco smoking, but a trend to underreporting has been observed in the last decade in some European countries. The anonymous and confidential character of the survey help to improve the quality of responses, but the order have to mention and discuss about it --is this occurring also in Greece?

5. Have the questions about environmental tobacco smoke in the questionnaire been validated? Are they also part of the common GYTS questionnaire?

6. Although the study's primary goal is not to establish comparisons with other countries, the use of the GYTS survey allows to easily establish them. A paragraph comparing the smoking prevalence among pupils with the prevalence rates observed in other European or Mediterranean country, at different stages of the tobacco epidemic, would be of interest.

Paragraphs of the Discussion can be improved (or deleted), and the author should discuss in-depth the limitations of their study design. In my opinion the paper could be accepted after minor essential revisions.

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