Reviewer's report

Title: Methodologies used to estimate tobacco-attributable mortality. A review.

Version: 1 Date: 8 May 2007

Reviewer: Eduardo Lazcano

Reviewer's report:

General

“Methodologies used to estimate tobacco-attributable mortality. A review”.

The paper presents for important points:

This paper is original constituting the reference for subsequent works that deal with the relation tobacco-mortality.

The authors not only describe the different methodologies, in addition they establish objective criteria and they classify them according to these criteria. This taxonomy of the methods allows seeing the areas in where the diverse authors who have developed the methods have directed their effort to, and the points that remain weak and that in the future will have to be object of greater emphasis.

The important point of the article is the discussion of the limitations and assumptions of the diverse methods. This section is of particular importance because it provides the users of these methods, the criteria to use a certain methodology correctly.

Its bibliographical revision is exhaustive, considering important papers and of great quality.

Nevertheless, the paper presents some hollows that is precise to fill, these are:

· The formulation of the methods CDC`s SAMMEC and SimSmoke simulation model, with greater emphasis in this last one due to its modern approach. Also to insist on the difference of method SAMMEC with the rest of the methods. I am conscious that this point can use enough space in the paper, but the success will be based in the balance of the extension-depth.

· The formulation of the method of Garfinkel. Being more explicit in the formulation of the fraction due to smoking and in the formulation of the awaited deaths

· The formulation of the method of Roger. Detailed formulation of the calculations of excess of mortality and the formulation of the relation between smoking and mortality

· The formulation of the predictive models. This point is the one that it requires of greater care, this is not just the formulation, it is also the elaboration of a scheme and the explanation of the assumptions. The formulation of the estimation of the “potential impact fraction” and of “trend impact fraction”.

In general terms, I consider that the paper achieve its objective, is a updated and critical revision of the used methods to consider the impact of the tobacco in mortality.

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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)
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.