Reviewer's report

Title: Key health promotion factors among male members of staff at a higher educational institution: a cross-sectional postal survey

Version: 3 Date: 10 October 2007

Reviewer: Chris Metcalfe

Reviewer's report:

The stated aim of this revised manuscript is to investigate health risk behaviour amongst male employees of a UK university. I hope the authors find this further set of comment useful. Addressing the last comment would be most important in my view.

[1] GENERAL
There are still a number of minor grammatical mistakes throughout the manuscript.

[2] PAGE 5, SECOND PARAGRAPH
The distinction between health behaviour and risk behaviour is not made clear.

[3] INTRODUCTION, PAGE 5
The aim of the manuscript needs to be stated at the end of the introduction section.

[4] PAGE 6, SECOND PARAGRAPH
SHS is not defined until the following page.

[5] PAGE 7, SECOND PARAGRAPH
It is unclear how a “piloting process” would establish reliability and validity.

[6] RESULTS SECTION
This is now quite an endeavour to get through. I suggest the authors are more selective in what they present – if there are key messages in this section they are getting lost.

[7] PAGE 11, BOTTOM
Table 7 is referred to – this is Table 6 in the current version.

[8] PAGE 14, STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS
The response rate is by far the most important limitation, and should be listed as a key weakness in the first paragraph of this section.

[9] FIGURE 1
Bar charts are for the presentation of counts or proportions. The previous style of
presenting mean units per day was better.

[10] TABLE 2
The data in this table is largely repeated in Table 3. Could drop Table 2, and rely on Table 3 with any necessary extra info presented in the text.

Is it worth combining some categories of educational qualification, and some job categories, to avoid very low numbers in some cells? For example, could school age qualifications be combined into a single category?

[12] TABLES 3, 5, 6
Too many footnotes!

[13] Table 4
The data in Table 4 is repeated in Table 5. Could drop Table 4?

[14] Table 5
Would be better comparing low versus high alcohol consumption.

[15] Tables 3, 5, 6
Some categories have empty cells, but it is the subsequent category where the confidence interval cannot be estimated – why? In one case the referent category has empty cells, but this only affects estimation of a confidence interval for comparison with the next category, and not the others. In some cases the odds ratio is the inverse of what I expected looking at the data. Please can the authors check that the analysis is presented correctly?

In several cases a very small category is chosen as the referent. More stable estimation would result from choosing a larger referent category.

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests