Reviewer's report

Title: An investigation of the smoking behaviours of parents before, during and after the birth of their children in Taiwan

Version: 3 Date: 9 October 2007

Reviewer: Karl E Lund

Reviewer's report:

General

Parental smoking and children’s possible exposure to ETS is a problem of impact for public health, and adequate information from Taiwan should be of interest for the health community. In the international literature, sound data from Asia is often missed.

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

The article lacks a more stringent structure. Parts of the text in the methods chapter should be placed in the introduction, parts in the results-chapter (response rate, sample characteristics etc.).

Table 1 (sample characteristics) seems too detailed, and includes information not addressed later on in the results/explanation-part.

Categories 4th, 5th and 6th child in table 2 should be pooled together. There are no statistical tests of significance, although the phrase “Women with four or five children had higher smoking prevalence than other women…..(page 7)” appears in the text.

In table 3 and 4, the basis (N’s) for some cells are small - calculations seems meaningless. The ideal table heading is self-explaining – these headings are far from that.

Table 5. Again table heading is not self-explaining. Consider headings like “Odds ratios for being a smoker with 95% confidence intervals (95% CI) across …….”. Why is social class I, II (fathers) & III (mothers) pooled together?

What is shown – the adjusted beta or the bi-variate Pearsons R?

Usually, income is a valid indicator for social class. Why is income shown separately? Why not use a standard SES-measure that includes both income, length of education and occupation?

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of
References 4-16 (in fact on third of the references) all address children’s impaired health due to exposure to ETS. The authors might consider to refer to one or two summary articles instead.

In order to discuss implications, the authors might consider using a more meditative model of children's ETS exposure, e.g. like in this study (Rise J & Lund KE 2005):


Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory 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, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.