Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence and determinants of tobacco use amongst junior collegiates in twin cities of western Nepal: A cross-sectional, questionnaire-based survey

Version: 1 Date: 12 November 2007

Reviewer: Murray Laugesen

Reviewer’s report:

General
Excellent paper. The last table on Determinants is particularly useful for future law making.

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

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
The abstract should contain the year and months of the fieldwork.
The abstract does not include the place of the surveys, but the title includes that.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
I think you should definitely explain why Figure 1 is lowest at 16 and Figure 2 is highest at 17. This may be something simple, like the smokers leave college earlier, but please comment in Discussion.

I see no mention of Health warnings on packets. This paper demonstrates that improved knowledge results in significantly lower smoking rates. On the basis of your findings you are entitled to let the facts speak strongly for graphic health warnings on packets, if Nepal does not yet have these yet.

Also the findings give some support for higher tax/price for cigarettes.

Findings strongly support a ban on the advertising of cigarettes and tobacco, before the situation deteriorates further, and advertising portrays smoking as normal and popular.

You mention the vulnerability of college students. You could perhaps mention that students in nearby Bhutan are largely protected due to their ban on cigarette sales. In Nepal, there is really no easy way to protect the vulnerability of young
people to tobacco addiction, without aiming for sterner measures against cigarette sales over the coming years. (As for smokeless, (see below) regulation might be more realistic. In both cases education is essential.)

Based on your finding that the use of smokeless tobacco is considerable, and rather than rely on health education alone (which persuades users to smoke cigarettes which is worse) have you thought of how some simple regulation of smokeless tobacco products at the border or however, (? no lime) could protect Nepalis from the worst types of smokeless tobacco. (Based on the principle that Smokeless tobacco can be made safer but cigarettes cannot).

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance 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 have no competing interests