Reviewer’s report

Title: Tobacco control policies in hospitals before and after the implementation of a national smoking ban in Catalonia, Spain.

Version: 1 Date: 12 January 2009

Reviewer: IRENE TRAMACERE

Reviewer’s report:

The manuscript deals with an interesting issue, focusing on the effects of the implementation of the Smoke-free Hospitals Project in Spain, overall and according to selected hospitals’ characteristics. The manuscript is well-written and conclusions are interesting. Below there are some minor points that may help to further improve the manuscript:

1. In the Methods section please provide further information on the Self-Audit Questionnaire, including the response rate in 2005 and in 2007.

2. In the last paragraph of the Results section please double check the estimate referred to the mean score of “education and training” of reference hospitals (17.5): the correct value is probably 7.5.

3. Please clarify whether p-values shown in the last paragraph of the Results section test differences between the two surveys (2005 and 2007) or among various strata of hospitals.

4. In the first paragraph of the Discussion section, authors stated that “the highest raises (not “raise”, please correct) have been produced in those hospitals with initial worst situation”. However, hospitals with low scores at baseline generally improve more than those with high scores, because of “regression towards the mean” (please consider Statistic Notes by Altman in BMJ, including Vickers and Altman 2001; BMJ 323:1123-1124). This should be discussed.

5. Please delete Figure 1, including findings in the Results section, only.

6. Tables have been submitted as “additional files”, but they should be included in the article.

7. Please consider to categorize hospitals by tobacco prevalence in two or three categories (preferably tertiles), only.

8. Please replace “>0.05” with “NS” to avoid possible misunderstandings.

9. Please carefully re-read the entire manuscript, for the presence of few typos, including for example “moths” instead of “months” in the first paragraph of the Methods section. Moreover, “Self-Audit Questionnaire” should be replaced with its acronym (SAQ), after the first occurrence.

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