Reviewer's report

**Title:** Association of parents’ alcohol use and family interaction with the initiation of alcohol use by sixth graders: A preliminary study in Taiwan

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**Reviewer:** Katherine Shelton

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Association of parents’ alcohol use and family interaction with the initiation of alcohol use by sixth graders: A preliminary study in Taiwan

Revised manuscript submitted to BMC Public Health

This revised manuscript is greatly improved and offers a more coherent account of the research conducted. I have some remaining comments for the authors to consider.

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

**Introduction**

The introduction theorises that the effects of parent alcohol use on the initiation and use of alcohol by children are mediated and moderated by the quality of family relationships, including family support and conflict (pg. 4 -5). This study, however, does not test either possibility. The regression analyses examine the relative role of number of parents (neither, one or both) who use alcohol and the two indices of family functioning as predictors of ever use of alcohol. The authors are referred to papers by MacKinnon et al., (2002) and Baron and Kenny (1986) for the appropriate approach to testing mediating and moderating hypothesis. As it stands, I don’t think the authors are in a position to address the question of whether family functioning explains why parent alcohol use status is associated with children’s initiation of alcohol use. With this in mind, the last paragraph of the introduction should be revised to provide a clear articulation of the hypotheses which removes reference to tests of mediation.


**Results**
The third paragraph on page 10 reports associations that are not significant. The text should be edited of these sentences: ‘Parents’ alcohol use was also positively correlated with…., however these correlations were not statistically significant’.

The way the odds ratios are presented in the text should be rephrased. Instead of interpreting the results as percentages, the text should simply state the odds ratios with the confidence intervals e.g. ‘Alcohol use by both parents was associated with first time alcohol use by sixth grade students (OR: 1.62, 95%CI=1.01-2.59).’

The focus of the logistic regression analyses should be the final model where all predictors are included in the model. The results of the final model are not described in any detail on page 11 e.g. the family measures are not reported. In addition, it is not clear to me why there are three separate regression analyses. The authors do not appear to have conducted a stepwise regression and the correlations already provides the reader with information about the initial pattern of associations between parent alcohol use status and the outcome variable. If the purpose is to assess what adding the family quality variables does to the prediction of alcohol initiation, then Model 1 and Model 3 are relevant (not Model 2).

As noted above, the reference to mediation in the results should be edited (see also page 13; second paragraph).

Minor Essential Revisions

Writing style

The style of the manuscript is much improved. The second and third paragraphs of the introduction would benefit from additional grammar checks e.g. I would rephrase the opening sentence of paragraph 2 as ‘Genetic factors contribute to the initiation of alcohol use’.

Abstract

It would be very helpful to replace the grade of the students with the mean age and range.

Method

1. The correlation between family conflict and family support should be reported in the results section and not the measures section.

2. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for family conflict is quite low and should be acknowledged.

Table 1

I think the information in this table could be replaced with one-two sentences of text in the results section.
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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.