Reviewer's report

Title: The effects of gender and ageing on health related behaviors

Version: 1 Date: 27 December 2008

Reviewer: aliki taylor

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory revisions

1. The data seem sound although I would have liked to see more numbers in the text rather than just percentages. Once you split the results into groups the overall numbers are quite small, and therefore there is more chance of bias and confounding. The authors have not corrected for deprivation or education, two factors which are known to heavily influence health related behaviour.

2. The statistical analysis is very basic and I am a little unclear from the tables what the overall results were as it appears to just be numbers or percentages.

3. I am not sure exactly how the chi-square tests were carried out and which groups were compared to each other. It is not enough to just report the p values.

4. I think it is important to directly compare the results of this study to other similar studies or national differences and highlighted variations.

Minor Compulsory revisions

1. I think the numbers of men and women recruited should have been equal or at least reflect the underling male and female groups in Australia and in addition I am not sure if the numbers in each age group are representative of the general population. Can the authors explain this or justify this?

Discretionary revisions

• I would have preferred to see the questionnaire. Some of the questions addressed may have been more suited to qualitative study such as focus groups particularly the questions on health belief.

• I think the discussion and conclusions are fair although it would be better to have particular points from the results presented and then compared to other studies as at the moment it’s a bit too descriptive and not specific enough. I am not sure that there are any specific conclusions that have been highlighted in enough detail.

• There are some more limitations that could be stated such as the small numbers and unequal numbers in males and females in the age groups.

• I think the text overall could be shortened and made a bit more focused.
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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 I have no competing interests