Reviewer's report

Title: The association between Colombian medical students' healthy personal habits and a positive attitude toward preventive counseling: cross-sectional analyses

Version: 1 Date: 6 January 2009

Reviewer: Patricia Rego

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this is interesting and well-written article. Its findings have important ramifications for medical education and public health in both Colombia and South America more generally.

Minor Essential Revisions

I have made some relatively minor changes to punctuation and expression throughout (see mark-up), e.g.

- The definition of a smoker within the text (page 7, line 7 under “Independent variables”) needs to be consistent with the correct definition given in Table 1, note (a) (“… during their lives and who currently smoke”).

Major Compulsory Revisions

However, the most important issue which needs to be clarified is:

- Were there specifically-worded questions relating to whether or not the students’ schools encouraged healthy behaviours (Table 3, note c; page 8, paragraph 2, lines 1-3)? The phrase “… medical school has an adequate environment to promote…” is very vague. As it stands, it appears that the authors have inferred from students’ more general responses that their schools positively encourage healthy behaviours etc. This is not justifiable. If there were specific school-related questions, these should be made explicit so that a legitimate inference may be drawn.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.