Reviewer's report

Title: Teenage drinking, alcohol availability and pricing: a study of risk and protective factors for alcohol related harms in school children

Version: 2 Date: 14 April 2009

Reviewer: Tomi Lintonen

Reviewer's report:

The paper has improved considerably as a result of the authors’ work based on the reviewers’ comments. There are still, however, a few points needing further attention.

1. The authors did nothing to respond to my concern over the use of the phrase ‘memory lapse’ to refer to the question ‘tend to forget things after drinking’ (??). Use of the phrase ‘memory lapse’ leads the reader to think of alcohol-caused blackouts, which is probably not the case here. It would help both the reviewer and the reader if the exact wording of the question was presented in the Methods section. In its current form, I think the paper over-interprets and exaggerates the meaning of forgetfulness. Please re-phrase ‘memory lapse’ with something more closely related to the question wording throughout the paper.

2. ‘p.8 information on the numbers of missing responses per variable is needed’ - this is not the same as showing the numbers of respondents in several categories. Missing response rates must be reported as percentages of sample; this enables the reader to make judgements on reliability and validity. Also, if there are large numbers of missing responses in some of the variables, the effects on results must be discussed.

3. p.13 3rd para while it is shown that bingeing is related to greater harm, the discussion on neurocognitive effects presumably based on the ‘memory lapse’ biological interpretation is not shown in this paper.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests