Reviewer’s report

Title: Contribution of parental and school personnel smoking to health risk behaviours among Finnish adolescents

Version: 1 Date: 27 April 2009

Reviewer: Anne Hammarström

Reviewer’s report:

Overall, the manuscript is well-written. The research question is well defined. The methods seem appropriate and are with some exceptions (as described below) adequately described. The authors link two different cross-sectional surveys of pupils as well as teachers in the same schools as the pupils and use multilevel analyses of the data. The manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition. The discussion and conclusions seem to be well balanced and adequately supported by the data.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The response rate is much lower in the teachers’ survey compared to in the pupil survey. The authors have not discussed the possible bias due to different response rate. They state in the discussion that these non-response rates seem to be random. However, this statement is speculative and needs more elaboration.

2. Despite the cross-sectional design the authors partly treat the data as longitudinal, in e.g. writing about "effects" on health behaviour.

3. The authors comment on their significant findings in Table 1. However, a more relevant question is the implication of the differences. Almost all differences are significant due to a high number of pupils in the study.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Although the label of Table 2 indicates that information is given about perceptions of school personnel smoking, no such data can be found.

2. What was the rationale for using different cut-off points in the categorisation of the school level characteristics?

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests' below.