Reviewer's report

Title: Health Effects of the Federal Bureau of Prisons Tobacco Ban

Version: 2 Date: 15 August 2012

Reviewer: Michael F Weaver

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This manuscript reports an observational study of inmates in 2 federal prison medical facilities who smoked tobacco prior to incarceration and who will be followed for 1-5 years during incarceration to gain data on the natural history of lung function after smoking cessation due to a prison smoking ban. Data to be collected include self-report measures, pulmonary function tests, and potential disease biomarkers. The Background gives a brief overview of limitations of studying pulmonary changes after smoking cessation. The design of the study is straightforward and described in the Methods. The Discussion addresses the study's possible impact. However, there are several ways in which this manuscript could be improved.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. What were the hypotheses for this study? These should be stated at the end of the Background section or in the Methods section.

2. What was the funding source for this study? This must be disclosed. Did the study sponsor put any limits on publication of any data? This must also be disclosed explicitly in the manuscript to help readers determine any potential bias.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The Methods do not describe any plans for following subjects after prison release, so the authors should not allude to any impact on smoking prevention after release, since this will not be studied. By the same token, the Background section should not imply considerable impact on public health.

Discretionary revisions

1. The authors briefly discuss prison smoking bans in the Background section, but have not cited several references specific to this (e.g., see Cropsey & Kristeller in Addictive Behavior).

2. This manuscript reports the study protocol, including a list of variables to be measured, but does not report any actual outcome result data, not even any preliminary findings.

3. Consider inclusion of preliminary data from the first 12-18 months of collection.

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 that I have no competing interests.