Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of a web-assisted tobacco quality improvement intervention of subsequent smoker behavior: A DPBRN Study

Version: 2 Date: 7 August 2012

Reviewer: BA Finegan

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
No: The abstract states “this study assessed the impact of our intervention on instances of advice given to dental patients during visits on quit rates 6 months after the intervention”. I do not understand sentence. The main outcome variable in the report appears to be the six-month point prevalence self-reported smoking cessation rate. However, the specific question in the follow-up survey appears to be about cigarette/cigars and smokeless tobacco use.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The selection criteria for the clinics are not clearly defined.
Why the four States were selected is not explained.
How many clinics were invited to participate, and how many refused?
Were the exit cards were handed to all patients or only to those who smoked?
It was not clear who returned the completed cards to the sealed box?
Was it the patients?
Out of 14300 (100 X 143) exit cards which were distributed, how many were returned? How many indicated consent to follow-up?
How many people were contacted at six month follow-up?
How many refused to participate?
Where there any demographic differences between the control and intervention groups?
The total number of participants was 564 from 143 clinics over 3 year period, which seems to be low – this should be discussed.
A flow diagram of patient recruitment would be beneficial.

3. Are the data sound?
The limited reported information, doesn’t allow for any conclusion about the data.
It would be helpful to have some information about the effect size and precision.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data
deposition?
Several items from CONSORT checklist for reporting on clinical trials were missing. Using this checklist and the CONSORT flow diagram could clarify some points about this trial, and allow for more comprehensive discussion section.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Based on the result section there was no difference in the attitude toward smoking, no difference in the NRT use, and no difference in the cessation rates, but the paper concludes in the abstract that the intervention works, a conclusion that the data do not support.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
The study reported on several limitations, but probably it is better to create a heading for study limitations, to discuss them in one section.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
The research question suggested that the paper will report on the impact of the intervention on instances of advice given to smokers to quit, and on the six months self-reported cessation rates. However, the result section in the abstract did not report on this
The p value is 0.8 while in the paper was 0.088

9. Is the writing acceptable?
This manuscript would benefit from further editing.

Minor Essential Revisions
1- References need to be revised, for example, the opening sentence refers to smoking rates for “the past five years”, but the reference details data from 1996-2001.

2- The first paragraph the paper discusses the underutilization of several interventions to enhance tobacco cessation but does not provide any details of these interventions.

3- Reported rates of a provider actually delivering cessation advice are very low (J Dent Educ. 2011 Apr;75(4):527). Reference # 4 detailing practitioner self-reported activity is somewhat misleading.

4- The second and third paragraphs need to be rewritten. The link between economic difficulties and visiting dentists for cosmetic reasons is not supported by the cited reference (#5).
5- The statement “Tobacco control quality improvement programs ----- successful” should be referenced.
6- There are results in the methods section (Clinical Setting first paragraph).
7- The paragraph “Some prior tobacco control ------ of quit-smoking advice” could be deleted.

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8- In paragraph (1) “the ultimate goal ----- quit smoking behavior” seems out of the context and needs to be supported or deleted.
9- In paragraph (1) “in this report, ----- reported outcomes” should be moved to discussion.

Page 7

10- Paragraph 2: “Dental Patients” why capital letter?
11- Paragraph 3: “Subsequently, as ------ practice visit” could be deleted.

Page 8

12- The follow-up question “Do you smoke, ------ now? If the patients responded yes, is that informative enough about the type of tobacco used? The term “now” could also be misleading.
13- Results: the first three paragraphs in the result section “the oralcancerprevention.org ------- version 11) should be removed and placed in the method section.

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14- Last paragraph “N=n from intervention, and N=n from control,” what does this mean?

Page 11

15- The statement “Some prior reports --------- attitude or knowledge” is repeated and not supported, it could be deleted.

Page 12

16- The first paragraph “In addition to ------ results in the trials” could better fit if presented as study limitations.
17- The statement “Intervention targeted ------ after dental visit” needs clarification..

Page 14:

Table (1) Ethnicity reported on 4/250 and 11/209 as Hispanic/Latino - what about the rest?
What about the age? (The exit cards asked about age)
Table (2) The N numbers for (gave advice to quit) are 330 for intervention and 273 for control, and for quit at six months 340 for intervention and 283 for control. If these numbers are related to the intention to treat analysis, clarification on why it was applied on this only and why there is the difference would be beneficial?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'