Reviewer's report

Title: The association between dental caries and television viewing among Chinese adolescents in Guangxi, China.

Version: 2 Date: 28 August 2014

Reviewer: Bradley Christian

Reviewer's report:

Major Revisions

BACKGROUND

General comments – The background to this topic is a bit thin. The authors should consider providing more information particularly statistics to support statements.

1. Line 39 – ‘..accompanied by changes in behavioural patterns….’: More detail on these changing ‘behavioural patterns’ will be informative.
2. Lines 41-43: Please provide the statistics to demonstrate the change in caries prevalence.
3. Line 44: This sentence needs to be revised for clarity.
4. Line 53, ‘A number of studies…. [13-17]’: Statistics or information from these referenced studies will help give some background to the issue being investigated.

METHODS

General comments – The STROBE guidelines should be used to guide the reporting of the methods section. This will help standardise reporting as well as guide the authors on what information to include in this section.

5. How did the analysis account for the stratified cluster sampling?
6. Please name the software(s) used for data management and analysis
7. Caries data is generally positively skewed. Was it the case in this study and if yes, how was this accounted for in the analysis?
8. Line 75: In the methods an age range of 12-17 years is stated, however, the tables show selected age groups of 12-, 14- and 17-year-old children. Was there a reason for choosing these particular age groups?
9. More detail on the training and calibration process for the dental examiners would be useful. Was INTRA-examiner reliability assessed?
10. Need to define ‘rate ratio’ and state how it was computed and in the results section the correct interpretation

RESULTS
10. Clear interpretation of the regression results is required
11. Table 1: The column ‘Within caries group’ – It is not clear what the authors are trying to show

DISCUSSION
12. The most important part of this section is to discuss the findings of this research in the context of not controlling for well documented risk factors for dental caries such as socio-economic status, oral hygiene behaviour and a cariogenic diet. Was there a reason for not including these factors? Is it possible to justify an association between dental caries and TV viewing without accounting for confounding factors?

Minor Revisions
13. Line 85: Sentence seems incomplete
14. Table 2: Typo in variable ‘TV’ – Last category should be ‘>180 minutes’
15. Table 3: Categories for variable ‘TV’ not shown

Discretionary Revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests