Reviewer's report

Title: Challenges to Obtaining Parental Permission for child participation in a School-based Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking Prevention Intervention in Qatar

Version: 1 Date: 1 June 2014

Reviewer: Luke Wolfenden

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript covers an important issue in health research. Obtaining parent consent is a necessary pre-requisite for child participation in research. Declining participation rates in child health research represent an impediment to rigorous scientific research. As such, research identifying barriers to participation are important to help develop recruitment strategies that maximise engagement among children and parents interested in research participation. The manuscript is well written and the presentation of such data from a sample in the Arab world is novel.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Nil

Minor essential revisions

1. The methods section in the abstract should include details of the sampling, and recruitment and data collection procedure
2. The introduction would benefit from discussion about why high participation rates are important for child health research - what are the scientific implications of low participation rates
3. Is there any evidence of selective non-participation in the study sample - that is, can the authors provide any information regarding any behavioural or demographic differences between participants and non participants in this study
4. The authors correctly identify that a major limitation of the study is that no information was collected from parent who did not return a consent form. This is an important limitation of the study. Can the authors give any indication how or if the findings reported in the study are likely to be different had such data been obtained.
5. The focus on qualitative interviews appears to be on consent form and methods of communication. This represents a relatively narrow focus and provides limited information regarding how participation rates could be improved. Was any data collected on other strategies that the participants thought could be used to encourage participation (and address their specific barriers to participation)
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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'