Reviewer's report

Title: The impact of increased treatment rates for alcohol dependence in the United Kingdom in 2004

Version: 3 Date: 12 August 2013

Reviewer: Jennifer R Mertens

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Major Compulsory Revisions
1. This manuscript is of very high potential significance given the high prevalence of unhealthy alcohol use in the UK. However, there are some important limitations to the analysis and some assumptions made in the paper that may be over-reaching. The study should be revised to include more information on the data estimates used, and should be revised to use only those estimates that are based on evidence applicable to the population studied. For example, the study incorrectly generalizes the effectiveness of brief intervention in hospitals to women and alcohol dependent patients. The Cochrane review cited (McQueen, 2011) which the authors use as evidence for effectiveness of brief interventions was based on studies of heavy alcohol users rather than those dependent and almost half of the studies in the systematic review were designed to exclude alcohol dependent individuals. Further most of the participants were males. Thus those findings are not generalizable to alcohol dependent patients, and may not be generalizable to women.

2. The analysis should be corrected to include an appropriate estimate from an alcohol dependent population, or alternatively, be focused on unhealthy male drinkers minus those with dependence.

3. It would be helpful to include more detailed information on the calculations, assumptions made, and studies cited (and the populations and outcomes they included) is needed in the article. For example, how was the reduction of 15.8 grams of ethanol calculated from the two studies—one on MI and one on CBT, as both meta-analyses included studies on drugs other than alcohol and many of the alcohol outcomes reported were either days of use or abstinence.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Page 4, paragraph 1. Please add a reference to the definition of heavy drinking given.

2. Page 7, last sentence, change “increase in AD coverage rates” to “increase in AD treatment coverage rates.”

3. The figure numbers for the first two figures are difficult to read.

4. There were a few grammatical errors (e.g., incorrect use of was/were) that should be corrected.
Discretionary Revisions
None.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**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.