Reviewer's report

Title: Predictors of current cigarette smoking among school-going adolescents in Punjab, India

Version: 1 Date: 18 July 2007

Reviewer: Silvano Gallus

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1) At the beginning of the Results section authors state that there was significant difference in the proportions of smokers by gender (p=0.097). This is inconsistent with the first paragraph of the Discussion section: “The difference (among sexes) was however not statistically significant”; and with the Conclusions: “Gender and age were not associated with smoking”.

2) Given the low number of smokers in this population, I strongly suggest to delete table 3 and to consider in table 2 the factors associated with current smoking status in males and females together. Estimates for strata of sex could be given, for some factors, in the text.

Moreover, I strongly suggest to consider one single model adjusted for age and sex, only. Being the present population enrolled in schools, it is likely that education reflects age. Considering both age and education in the same model could bring to an over-adjustment.

In the text, authors sometimes show multivariate (pag 5) and sometimes univariate (pag 7) estimates. Considering the age- and sex-adjusted model only would help readers to better understand various findings.

3) Other mayor points:

Abstract: The Methods should include the sample size. The Results should replace the Conclusions. The Results should show the prevalence of smoking in the present population and the odds ratios (ORs) found by multivariate analyses.

Background:

The first sentence could be deleted. In case authors decide to keep it, cardiovascular diseases should be added to the list of disorders caused by smoking.

In the first paragraph, it is not clear where Mizoram and Goa are. Are their smoking prevalence respectively the maximum and the minimum of the cross country comparison?
Methods:
Methods should include the sample size.
Page 4, in the last sentence it is written that model 2 was adjusted for the factors in model 1 as well as for age and education level. But model 1 is unadjusted. Authors should carefully read the entire manuscript.

Results:
Page 5, second sentence: “bivariate analyses” should be “univariate analyses”.
Page 5, second paragraph: substitute “… were 4.88 (95% CI 2.50-9.51) likely to have been current smokers” with “… were 4.88 (95% CI 2.50-9.51) TIMES MORE likely to have been current smokers”.
Page 5, third paragraph: substitute “…all closest FRIEND who smoked were 8.12 LESS likely to have…” with “…all closest FRIENDS who smoked were 8.12 TIMES MORE likely to have…”

Table 2-3:
With reference to “perceived number of friends” I suggest to change the order of the three categories in: 1) Less friends; 2) No difference; 3) More friends.
With reference to “perceived effect of smoking on body weight (delete in table 2 pag 5 the subsequent “on smoking”)” I suggest to change the order of the three categories in: 1) Lose weight; 2) No difference; 3) Gain weight.
Please, also consider to change the order of various categories for the other factors shown in tables.
In table 3, page 17 the second category of “smoking status of closest friends” (none of them smoked) should be deleted.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
In at least two occasions (first paragraph of the Results section, and first paragraph of page 7) the word “although” is used instead of “given that”.
A revision of the English language is needed. Authors should carefully read the entire manuscript (tables included) for the presence of several typos and mistakes.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
Background: The last sentence of the first paragraph on COPD could be deleted.

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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