Reviewer's report

Title: Correlates of current smoking among school-going adolescents in Punjab, India: results from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2003

Version: 2 Date: 12 September 2007

Reviewer: Silvano Gallus

Reviewer's report:

General
After the first revision, the presentation of the present manuscript highly improved. However, some statistical problems have been introduced in the present version, and some major points should be addressed:

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

1) Authors should justify the decision to use the (and that) “weighting factor” in the analysis. Statistical methods are not properly shown and it is not clear whether the parameters considered in the formula were arbitrarily chosen, or not. A relevant reference should moreover be added. It is possible that the present “weighting factor” is the responsible of a clear mistake in estimating the 95% CIs. From the small 95% CIs shown, it seems that the sample size considerably increased as compared to the previous version. In order to give an example, I simulated in a univariate logistic regression analysis the OR of males, compared to females, using 2014 adolescents, 58% (1168) males, and 4.0% males smokers (47) and 2.6% (22) female smokers, as shown in the results section. The OR for males was 1.57 (95% CI: 0.94-2.63) [and not 1.25 (95% CI: 1.24-1.27) as authors reported], and the adjusted CI should be similar, or larger, to the one I estimated.

This statistical problem systematically reduces the width of the CIs, altering the statistical significance of the shown ORs.

I suggest not to consider in the analysis the weighting factor, or to justify the necessity to include it in the analyses, solving the problem for the CIs.

2) In the conclusions (p. 8) the sentence “gender and age ere not associated with funding” has not been changed, although, in this version, sex is associated.

Please notice that in my previous revision already report to double check this sentence. Authors should therefore critically re-read the entire text also for the presence of a few typos or editorial mistakes.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Abstract: The first two sentences of the Methods section of the Abstract could be condensed in: “... conducted in 2003 in Punjab, India, on 2014 adolescents (XXXX boys and YYY girls)”

Abstract: Results of Abstract should be shortened, identifying the most important factors associated to smoking in the present population.

Table 1, closest friend smoke: please, order various items in “none, some and most” (not “some, none, most”) to better show the apparent trend in the risk estimates. For each factor considered, it would be preferable to change the order of the various items moving the reference category to the top.

Discussion: Please, double check the Ors for those who perceived smokers had less friends (3.12 for males and 3.18 for females). They do not correspond to the estimates shown in table.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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