Reviewer's report

Title: A CRITIQUE OF the WHO TobReg s (*) Advisory Note Report entitled: Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking: Health Effects, Research Needs and Recommended Actions by Regulators (Tobacco Free Initiative, 2005) (*) WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation

Version: Date: 27 October 2006

Reviewer number: 2

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript from Chaouachi is a critical analysis of the document published by the WHO on waterpipe tobacco smoking, which is commonly known in the western world as “narghilè”.

Major comments

Although this paper is not a “classical” report about the negative results of a clinical trial, it adresses an important social and medical problem in several areas of the world, where the waterpipe use is very diffuse. The paper pointed out a surprisigly large number of weaknesses and concerns about the “Advisory note”. The critical analysis consists of a straightforward point-by-point discussion and is supported by appropriate references.

Despite its large use, the health effects of waterpipe tobacco smoke has not received great attention, and the attempt of the Advisory note was to fill this gap. Unfortunately, the advisory note suffers from the above-mentioned concerns, as this report has demonstrated. Therefore I believe that the critical analysis of an official WHO document deserves publication.

However, I found the langage used too colloquial for a scientific article. Several expressions such as “anyway”, “so on”, “so”, “we did it”, “better said”, “clearing up”, “not so minor”, “we are all the more surprised” must be avoided.

Furthermore, the aim of the article is not clearly stated in the introduction.

Finally, conclusions are too lon, especially the first part.

Minor comments

1. The abstract should be more structured, and clearly explain the content of the manuscript and state the conclusion. Now it looks more like an introduction.

2. The refences are not formatted according to the style of JNRBM

3. References cannot be reported as “14a” or “16a”; they should be changed to 15 and 17, respectively.

4. Pag 6, line 15: change “suggests and” to “suggests to”

5. Page 7, line 5: the author states that “This argument is not consistent at all”, what is the reason?

6. Page 9, line 3 from bottom and line 10 from bottom: these stataments cannot stay as they are; the author should either clearly explain these reasons or (better) delete these sentences

7. Page 10: Delete statement starting with “if we are wrong” and change to “we are open for discussion” or something similar

8. Reference n.20 is not published and cannot be quoted

9. Reference n.36 is unclear, the author should list to which references he is referring to

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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