Reviewer's report

Title: Cigarette Smoking, Nicotine Dependence and Anxiety Disorders: A systematic review of population based, epidemiological studies

Version: 1 Date: 24 June 2012

Reviewer: Terry Lewin

Reviewer's report:

Overall Comments

This paper provides a thoughtful and well-crafted systematic review of population based studies examining relationships between cigarette smoking, nicotine dependence and anxiety disorders. While it clearly has relevance to the psychiatric clinical and research fraternity, it is also likely to be of interest to a broader array of health professionals, precisely because opportunities to impact on smoking behaviors, stress and anxiety occur in many settings, including primary care, drug and alcohol services, and numerous community agencies.

Major Compulsory Revisions

None.

(The paper addresses interesting questions, uses suitable methods, and reaches appropriate conclusions).

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Because the same studies/publications are mentioned in several of the accompanying Tables (with some necessary repetition of content) and there are several studies/projects that are linked to multiple publications, it may be useful to draw up a simple chart or figure that shows these linkages. What I had in mind was a tabular layout (referred to as Figure 2), with say six columns and a single row for each publication – which could be grouped alphabetically within projects (with these possibly in chronological order), with the bottom set of rows devoted to the single publication studies (whatever works best). The columns in this tabular figure would correspond to Study/Publication; Prospective longitudinal studies – Risk of smoking and ND (Table 1); Prospective longitudinal studies – Risk of anxiety disorders (Table 2); Quasi-prospective longitudinal studies – Risk of smoking and ND (Table 3); Quasi-prospective longitudinal studies – Risk of anxiety disorders (Table 4); and Cross-sectional associations (Table 5). The entries in the cells within this tabular figure would simply be asterisks, or ticks, etc, so that you could see at a glance how each of the 48 publications was being used in this systematic review. Hopefully, this explanation makes sense – and that the proposed tabular figure would make it easier for the reader to follow the accounts given in the text, and to appreciate the level of repetition, etc, in the five Tables. Obviously the publication entries in the first column should also include
the reference number – but possibly the sample size as well (??)

2. There are no “Summary sentences” in the text associated with Tables 3 and 4.

Discretionary Revisions

3. The Table of Contents does not include reference to Table 5.

4. Notwithstanding their inclusion in the Glossary, please spell out terms in full the first time that they are used – e.g., Hazard Ratio (HR) and Odds Ratio (OR) on page 6.

5. The second sentence of the Results should probably be altered to improve the fit with the subsequent section: “Thirteen studies were found that utilized population based samples to assess a prospective relationship between ADs, smoking behavior, and nicotine dependence.”

6. In the Declaration of Conflicts of Interest – the third word of the second sentence should be “has”.

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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 to declare.