Reviewer's report

Title: Socio-demographic correlates of six indicators of alcohol consumption: Survey findings of students across seven universities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Version: 1 Date: 22 July 2013

Reviewer: Anton Kunst

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory revisions

- The Discussion section should focus more on the particular contribution that this paper makes to the literature. The end of the Introduction section argues that the value of this paper as compared to other studies is in three points. Two of these are elaborated in detail: the assessment of different measure of alcohol use, and the analyses of different universities within the same country. I would therefore expect the authors to reflect on these two points in the Discussion. What similarities and dissimilarities did they observed for the different alcohol measures, and what lessons do they draw from this (both for substantively and methodologically)? To what extent are the results similar for different universities, and what does this learn us about the determinants of alcohol use among university students? I think that these are the key questions that are to be addressed in the Discussion in order to contribute to the international literature.

Minor Compulsory revisions

- The text of the results section tends to focus on positive or significant results. I think that it would do more justice to the results to report on the general patterns that are observed, thereby including both the ‘positive’ and the ‘negative’ results.

- At the end of Results, when authors report on the statistically significant interactions with gender, they should mention that total number of interactions that were tested. This will inform us what proportion of all tests was not found to be significant.

- For a paper that is interested in socio-demographic determinants of alcohol use, the recommendations at the end of the paper are very little focussed on such determinants. Instead, the authors recommend to “... educate student groups..” and “..inform student groups ..”. In addition of this focus on health education, I would expect them to consider a broader set of policy options, including environmental factors and alcohol supply policies.

Discretionary Revisions

- I recommend the author to discuss other studies in less detail, and to rely more on previous reviews. A considerable part of both introduction and discussion is
filled with details from other studies. This distracts from the line of argument to be developed for this particular paper.

- I found it remarkable to note that, even though many socio-demographic determinants did have some relationships with alcohol use, alcohol use was high among ALL socio-demographic categories. Similarly, it was high in all universities, with no university consistently and substantially performing better. The authors may check this in more detail, and reflect on the results.

- I was surprised that no alcohol measure was included on the total number of drinks per day or per week. This is an alcohol measure commonly used in surveys among adults. The authors may need to explain to some readers why such a measure was not included.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests