Reviewer's report

Title: Can obtaining informed consent alter self-reported drinking behaviour? A methodological experiment

Version: 2 Date: 3 October 2014

Reviewer: Sabrina Pit

Reviewer's report:

I trust that the editor will check whether the study adheres to the CONSORT statement.

General

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. The paper is well structured and clearly written. From my point of view this study potentially shows that recruitment locations and timing (run in or main study) could play an important role in studies and researchers should think about this more carefully when devising recruitment strategies. A table of response rates by location and phase would be helpful or can be presented in the flowchart? Please spell out IG and CG in the tables. The finding in the run in phase could be just a chance finding. Also, I think a stronger argument is required why the authors think consent impacts on self-report, more discussion of the literature to back this up

Abstract

• P2, line 44, run in phase is an unclear statement for an abstract, need explanation
• P3: line 51, which…..dependence’ delete
• AUDIT score ranges from x to x

Introduction

• Can you please explain the Zelen design
• Line 98: can you provide more detail or examples on what the various types of social desirability are and their impact on underreporting
• I am not convinced that a consent form would lead to different reporting in drinking behavior, it is discussed but not convincingly. Are there clear studies that show this is an issue or a theory why this would be or other reasons?

Methods/ results

• Can aim move to introduction.
• The population that was recruited from was not very clear.
• Line 198 to 206 can that go in flowchart to reduce text.
• Was the study powered enough to detect interaction effects, was this just interaction effects without the single variables that were compared in the model?
• Line 223-226: can you explain in simple words what that means

Discussion
• Line 237: can you tell us about the specific locations, was there a systematic difference? Later on you discuss the differences again re location, maybe discuss together for clarity
• Please put in the flow chart: in which phase which locations were used, with the associated response rates, or response rates can go in table

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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.