Reviewer’s report

Title: The prevalence and correlates of alcohol use and alcohol use disorders: a population based study in Sri Lanka

Version: 3 Date: 17 March 2015

Reviewer: Aravind Pillai

Reviewer’s report:

This paper is an important contribution to alcohol research in South Asia, as very few studies have systematically examined alcohol use disorders in the region using validated structured psychiatric interviews.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

The authors have used data from the Colombo Twin and Singleton study. From the data presented in table 1, about two-third of the participants were twins and rest were singletons. To estimate the prevalence and correlates of AUD in the general population, an important assumption has been made, i.e. twins included in the study are representative of the general population. Yet, the mean of age of twin were significantly higher and they were less likely to be alcohol users (58.3% twins vs. 72.3% singleton.) This difference in alcohol use was significant even after controlling for age, thus it looks like singletons were about 40% more likely to be alcohol users compared to twins. Hence, I am not convinced that the sample used in the study to estimate the prevalence is true to the general population. Nevertheless, the findings are broadly in agreement with other studies from the region and the authors may want to explain this discrepancy or mention this as a limitation of the study.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. The study population is limited to urban and semi urban regions of Colombo and is not be nationally representative. Though this is mentioned in the discussion, I would suggest modifying part of the title to “a population based study in Colombo, Sri Lanka”.

2. Please include the number of participants from each group (twins and singletons) and refusals in the results. Add the number of participants (n) to the prevalence and symptom profile described in the results.

3. Missing reference: Introduction 2nd paragraph, line 65

4. Suggest updating the prevalence figures from Sri Lanka reported in the introduction, 2nd paragraph with latest version of WHO global status report (2014)

5. Describe the PAF and its interpretation from table 3 in the result.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
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