Reviewer's report

Title: Do consumers 'Get the facts'? A survey of alcohol warning label recognition in Australia

Version: 2 Date: 9 June 2015

Reviewer: Kirsty Scholes-Balog

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. Abstract. Gender is stated as a significant predictor of awareness of the logo and warning labels; however, gender was not significant in any of these models.

2. Abstract. Line 45-48, describing results of the multivariable log regression analyses predicting awareness of logo and warning labels. High risk drinking (AUDIT-C) was not sig in all models (only in 1), so it is confusing to include it here. There is confusion throughout the manuscript with the wording/description of results with regard to high risk drinking (AUDIT) vs. binge drinking (presented in the post hoc sensitivity analyses).

3. Methods. Participants. Where was the online research panel obtained from? This should be stated. Similarly, 869 participants obtained from this panel were outside the target age range and were excluded. All the panels I am aware of require you to state the age, gender etc of your target sample. Why were there over 800 participants who completed the survey but were outside your target age range?

4. Methods. Participants. 230 participants excluded due to missing data. Why was multiple imputation not considered for the missing data? This is a lot of missing data to exclude. Authors should either impute data or justify why listwise deletion was used.

5. Methods. Data analysis. Was multicollinearity checked prior to multivariable regressions?

6. Results. Sensitivity analyses. The inclusion of these analyses should be justified/explained. Multicollinearity for each of these analyses should be checked and stated. Need to be clear about what these analyses add to the analyses presented in the tables, and how they aid in interpretation of the findings. As the manuscript stands, these findings contradict the findings in the Tables regarding high-risk drinking (AUDIT). That is, the measure of high risk drinking (AUDIT) shows no association with any of the DV’s (except pregnancy warning), whereas the analysis of the separate items from this AUDIT measure shows different. This then leads to confusion and contradiction in the discussion section when discussing ‘binge drinking’/high-risk drinking as a significant predictor. If the authors want to focus on the 'binge drinking’ measure as a significant and important predictor (as is attempted in the discussion), then I would include this variable in all models (rather than the AUDIT measure of high risk drinking), and
present these analyses in the tables.

7. Discussion. Paragraph 1. See comments 1 and 2 above. These sentences are the same as in the abstract, and issues raised above should be addressed.


9. Discussion. Paragraph 4. The three consistent predictors of logo and label recognition/awareness are stated to be age, drinking directly from the bottle or can, and frequency of binge drinking. However, from the tables, the results show that the 3 consistent predictors are actually age, drinking directly from a bottle or can, and support for warning labels. This should be amended. Also see above comments re: ‘binge drinking’ measure and discussion of findings.

10. Discussion. Page 4. Paragraph 4. Line 341. Authors refer to no association between visiting drinkwise website and both age and binge drinking. However, in results section, an association between binge drinking and the drinkwise website was reported (if I am reading it correctly). See pg 12, line 251.

11. Discussion. Page 4. Paragraph 4. As above, clarification of different in findings for AUDIT high-risk drinking vs. the AUDIT item on binge drinking discussed here. Again, I think it would be best to focus on one measure (perhaps the item on binge drinking, if you think that is important. Might also be guided by reliability of the AUDIT measure in this sample- chronbachs alpha- see below point 13.) and then present the models with that one measure in the tables, and discuss those findings. This would eliminate the confusion and inconsistent findings with the various measures of ‘at-risk’ drinking that are included in the results/sensitivity analysis section.

Minor essential revisions

12. Introduction. Page 4, paragraph 3, line 101, should read ‘free recall OF the warnings’


14. Methods. Measures. Provide a reference to support the cut-offs used to dichotomise the AUDIT variable.

15. Methods. Measures. What sort of drinks were included in the ‘other’ category. Would be helpful to give an example or two. Especially since this emerged as a significant predictor in some of the models.

16. Discussion. Conclusion. The finding that consuming alcoholic drinks from their container was a strong predictor of all DV’s is an important one and should be mentioned in the conclusion (and the abstract conclusion). The findings suggest that warnings in other places in addition to on the beverage packaging, as well as the use of other strategies to convey these health warning messages, will be essential.

Discretionary revisions

17. Introduction. The authors may want to cite some international stats on alcohol
use and harms in the first paragraph, to increase relevance to an international readership.

18. Methods. Measures. If I understand the calculation of ‘awareness’ correctly, it seems as if there were some participants who recalled any given label, but then did not recognise it in the next step. Is this correct? And if so, why do the authors think this might be?

19. Results. It would be helpful to add some more subtitles to the results section to partition out results for logo, labels, and then drinkwise website.

20. Discussion. Pg 14, paragraph 2. Suggested edit of grammar in line 326-328 ‘utilise a website presented on a warning label would be to increase the frequency with which warning labels appear on products and increase their size and, thus, readability.’

**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