Reviewer’s report

Title: What do we know about the effects of exposure to 'Low alcohol' and equivalent product labelling on the amounts of alcohol, food and tobacco people select and consume? A systematic review.

Version: 0 Date: 03 Apr 2016

Reviewer: Sharyn Rundle-Thiele

Reviewer's report:

I feel the paper has serious flaws which will require more thinking from the research team before the paper can reach a standard that is suitable for publication.

A meta-analysis is reported for RCTs conducted on food labels. A key issue is the outcome measures across the 12 RCTs are different. Can product selection, consumption, beliefs, intentions and appeal be considered in the one meta-analysis? Meta-analyses are typically conducted on measures of the same underlying construct. Given that intentions do not always lead to behavior and that correlations between these two constructs are low I feel it is a long bow to draw to call these the same underlying construct. Detailed data would need to be provided to justify this decision. Alternatively, given you have 5 different measures for the 12 RCT studies you could deal with this by having two investigators independently examine each outcome variable - and to group them into categories resolving discrepancies through consensus. You could then analyze each category.

A second issue relates to your decision to draw inferences relating to alcohol from food and tobacco studies when you clearly state - "alcohol is also distinct from food or tobacco consumption in terms of its disinheritig effect, which could moderate the ways product labels of this kind influence awareness perception and behavior at the point of purchase." Unless, compelling evidence can be provided to underpin this rationale the current review is highly flawed. For these two reasons I have recommended rejection as I feel a considerable re-think of the work is required prior to publication.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?  
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?  
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English  
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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