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: 1 Date: 29 Nov 2016

Reviewer: Cindy Gray

Reviewer's report:

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.

I think the authors have dealt with this point adequately in their response

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 disinhibiting effect, which could moderate the ways product labels of this kind influence awareness perception and behaviour 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.

I think the authors have clearly stated that the transferability of findings from food and tobacco has not been established by this review on p26 ln 44-45, before discussing the possibility that they might be. I therefore do not believe the review to be flawed in this regard.

However, I think given that the review only found one NRS on alcohol consumption, that the flow of the argument in the abstract and discussion should be changed, for example:

1) there is very little evidence at all on alcohol
2) from food and tobacco studies some evidence exists that……

3) This may be transferable to alcohol, but more research is required

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

Yes

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

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Acceptable

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