Author’s response to reviews

Title: Investigating the growing trend of non-drinking among young people; analysis of repeated cross-sectional surveys in England 2005-2015

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Version: 2 Date: 28 Jun 2018

Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Andrea,

Thank you for your additional comments on how to improve the manuscript. Please find below our responses to the revisions:

Technical Comments:

(1) Please state at the end of the “Authors’ contributions” section that "All authors read and approved the final manuscript".

LN: This has been done.

(2) Please move your list of abbreviations to above the Declarations section.
Editor Comments:

Thank you for making the revisions requested by previous reviewers: the paper reads much more easily now. Having gone through your revised manuscript I am going to request three more revisions but for clarity only: once these are done I will be happy to accept this paper.

1) The second sentence in the discussion (ll.241-242) is incomplete I think and therefore may potentially lead to confusion - please clarify: you start talking about weekly abstinence and then conclude as though 1/5 drinkers did not drink at all in 2015.... which is it?

LN: Apologies for the confusion. We have now inserted a sentence indicating that as well as more young people not drinking alcohol at all, there are also more drinkers engaging in weekly abstinence. Hope that this is clear now:

“Identifying as a non-drinker has increased among young people, mainly attributable to fewer younger people taking up drinking, shown by the rate of lifetime abstainers almost doubling from 9% in 2005 to 17% in 2015. In addition more drinkers are engaging in weekly abstinence. In 2005, just over a third of those aged 16 to 24 did not have a drink in the past week, compared with a half in 2015.”

2) Similarly, I am confused by the paragraph starting on ll.255 in the discussion - please simplify the sentences and clarify accordingly.

LN: We have both reworded the sentences on line 255:
“We cannot know the reasons for why non-drinking has remained stable among ethnic minorities, however it does suggest that increases in non-drinking among young people, is unlikely to be attributable to non-drinking among ethnic minorities.”

And the start of the following paragraph:

“Increasing rates of non-drinking among young people are to be welcomed. Instead of behaviours becoming polarised between extremes such as binge drinking and abstinence, increases in non-drinking were correlated with a decline in mean units of alcohol consumed, and the proportion binge drinking.”

3) in this paragraph you need to correctly cite Skog's Collectivity of Drinking (correct the typo) - I also note that you have not cited the original paper and so you need to amend your citation appropriately if you have not read the original paper....

LN: Thank you for spotting the typo which has been corrected. We have now also inserted an additional reference.