Reviewer's report

Title: Opening windows and closing gaps: A case analysis of Canada's 2009 tobacco additives ban and its policy lessons

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Reviewer: Michael Chaiton

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The paper, "Opening windows and closing gaps: A case analysis of Canada's 2009 tobacco additives ban and its policy lessons" presents an interesting look at Canada's ground breaking flavour regulations and presents some lessons for other jurisdictions on the process of public health policy making.

My only major comment is that the paper I think really makes the case that the missing ingredient for policy making in Canada was evidence-based research, particularly technocratic policy research. The consistent story that the law was made possible by presenting a policy solution suitable for the political climate at the right moment in time. It seems that while there was discussion regarding the law particularly those products that ended up excluded. There was minimal research into the potential policy effects of the regulations themselves. This lack of resourcing by the government may have facilitated the ability to pass a useful public health law but left the legislation vulnerable to the much greater knowledge of industry. This potential suggests that post implementation monitoring and evaluation is a crucial component of the implementation process. Furthermore, it seems to suggest that sufficient research of the technical details is also important but must be done in a way that does not hold up the process.

Additionally, in terms of definition of the law, it's important to highlight that the law did remove additives from all products with filters, which in the end may have been more important to the success of the law than the size loophole.

Minor comments

There are a number of referencing typos throughout that should be fixed

P4 line 18 streams or stream?

P6 line 14. I believe that the Quebec Coalition was founded in 1996 not the 80's while CCS is much older.
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.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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Yes

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Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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