Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 11 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Irene Lambraki

Reviewer's report:

I enjoyed reading the draft article that presents a case study about Canada's experience with getting the first tobacco additives ban (Bill C-32) adopted in 2009. The study applies Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework and Helco's conceptualization of the development of welfare policy to understand the process and conditions that got the first tobacco additives ban adopted, the challenges encountered and the role that NGOs played throughout the policy process. While Canada has a rich and successful history in moving tobacco control policies forward to present day, the study offers insights (e.g., about framing, technical aspects of the policy process, etc) that can benefit others involved in similar policy efforts in their own jurisdictions. Overall, I feel the findings of this study will be of interest to people involved in and/or researching policymaking processes, tobacco control and / or public health.

COMPULSORY REVISIONS:

Research Q's or Objectives:

You have a background section, a section on conceptual framework and methods, but no research questions or research objectives stated. Please add as this is recommended as part of BMH Public Health's manuscript instructions.

Methods Section (page 4 lines 38-59 and page 5 lines 4-18):

There is some information that needs to be added to provide the reader with greater clarity about methods, including any efforts used to establish the trustworthiness of your qualitative study.

The manuscript identifies key informant interviews and documents as the data sources. Please indicate whether these were semi-structured or unstructured interviews along with when interviews were conducted (e.g., between [month] and [month], [year]).

You indicate that a range of documents were identified. Please describe how documents were identified (e.g., through key informants, online search using particular search terms?).
On Page 5 lines 11-16, information on how data was coded and analysed is presented. I am interested to know what was involved in the coding and analysis process. For instance, under "Author's Contribution" section on page 15: lines 34-40, it indicates that RLen and AR contributed to data analysis. Were both researchers involved with coding of data? If so, was there effort to ensure inter-coder reliability to verify and refine codes with any disagreements resolved through discussion? If inter-coder check was conducted, please indicate this.

I am also not clear whether triangulation of data was employed as part of your analysis. It sounds as though there might have been triangulation of data across key informants at least based on what was heard during the interviews. For instance, you interviewed key informants representing different types of organizations (and thus perspectives) and on page 4: lines 51-55, it indicates there was consistency heard across the different informants during the interviews. Were data from documents, interviews and/or between documents and interviews triangulated? Please briefly state this if so. Also, please briefly note other efforts used to establish trustworthiness of data as relevant.

Results Section (starting page 5):

The quotes from key informants or documents that were used to illustrate key points were effective. However, please check quotes to ensure the anonymity of each key informant is protected. For instance, under "Availability of Data and Materials" section on page 15: lines 48-51, it indicates that “interview data won't be shared in order to ensure the protection of the informants' anonymity.” However, on page 7: lines 35-38, clearly reveals that one of the key informants was the former communications person to the former Harper government. Please correct this.

Other compulsory comments:

Make sure the referencing style is correct and consistent. For instance, on page 8, lines 5-6 where a Standing Committee on Health Report, 2009 is referenced after the quote with no numbered reference to follow. In comparison, page 8: line 10, references another Standing Committee on Health Report, 2009 after the quotation that was drawn from that report and that sentence ends with reference number: (30)(30). Please correct as is appropriate.

There are a few places where the sentences need fixing. These are the ones I caught:

Page 8: Lines 24-25.

Page 10: lines 4-5

Page 15: line 37 (Author's contributions section)
Please ensure references in the reference list conform to BMC Public Health requirements.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

It might be useful to present a brief preamble at the start of the results section (Page 5) to orient the reader to how the results are structured.

Under each stream in the results section, please consider providing some details about what Kingdon's Framework says is important to each stream. For example, Page 6: line 54 introduces the "Politics Stream". Consider adding a brief description about how the politics stream relates to the political climate (e.g., impending elections, change in government, interest groups lobbying activities, or other) and how this climate shapes political receptiveness to change and how proposed policies are evaluated. Then go into your results for that stream.

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.

No

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Needs some language corrections before being published
**Declaration of competing interests**

Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license ([http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal.