Author’s response to reviews

Title: Exploring the characteristics of newly defined at-risk drinkers following the change to the UK Low Risk Drinking Guidelines: A retrospective analysis using Health Survey for England data

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear reviewers and editors,

Many thanks for taking the time to read our revised manuscript and for the additional comments provided. We have made several changes to the revised manuscript in line with your comments and include a description of the changes below.

Reviewer 2:

Methods:

Measures: The details of age groups have been clarified, stating: “grouped from 16-34, 35-54, 55-74 and 75+” as per the groups in the revised analysis (page 7: line 30).

Sample: Thank you for highlighting the error in this section. Page 7, line 49 has now been corrected as follows: “newly defined at-risk male drinkers according to the new guidelines (men drinking >14 units/week)”

Repetition of objectives: In order to be more concise, the methods section has now been arranged under the titles ‘Objective 1’ and ‘Objective 2’ rather than repeating the full objectives each time. The full objectives have only been included in the background and results sections.

Table numbering issue: With regard to the table numbers, Table 1 is first mentioned on page 7, line 48, Table 2 is first mentioned on page 8, line 14, Table 3 is first mentioned on page 9, line 10 and Table 4 is first mention on page 9, line 47. I believe the issue is that Tables 1 and 2 are mentioned in the methods section (as they contain sample sizes); however in the results section,
Table 3 is referred to prior to Table 2. We have left the table numbering as it is for the resubmission, but will happily adhere to any further recommended changes.

Results:

Objective 2: This section has been reworded removing the word ‘increase’ and instead referring to the difference in percentages of men classified as at-risk under the old vs the new guidelines.

Page 9, line 36: The word ‘cohort’ has been replaced by ‘sample’.

Page 9, line 39: We decided to omit the line relating to the South West of England as the result was non-significant.

Results and Discussion: All mentions of increased or reduced likelihoods have been replaced with greater or lower odds in line with the new analysis.

Conclusions: The wording ‘affected by’ has been changed and this sentence has been amended for clarity: “Men aged 55-74, current or ex-smokers, men in managerial or professional occupations and white men had greater odds of being at-risk drinkers under the new and previous guidelines and these are the groups already known to be drinking the most, …” Any reference to the new guidelines affecting change have been revised throughout the results and discussion sections.

We thank you for your ongoing contributions to our manuscript and we look forward to receiving your response relating to the changes we have made.

Yours sincerely,

Philippa Case, Nicola Shelton and Linda Ng Fat