Author’s response to reviews

Title: Drinking patterns and the distribution of alcohol-related harms in Ireland: Evidence for the prevention paradox

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See attached supplementary material

Reviewer One

Comment one: The four classifications of drinkers are now presented in a text box based on this suggestion, see Page 9.

Comment two: This has been corrected, see p.3, line 43.

Comment three: This has been corrected throughout the paper. All commas have been removed from numbers except in the case of whole numbers with five or more digits, e.g., “37,236,” where commas have been left in for ease of reading.

Comment four: “Harm to health” was not further defined in the survey and was left up to participants’ interpretation. This question and the other harms questions were based on the “adverse social consequences of own alcohol use” questions included in the Standardized Measurement of Alcohol-Related Troubles (SMART), a set of guidelines for the standardisation of drinking population surveys in EU. A sentence on this information has been added to the methods section, p10. Line 196:
“These questions were based on the “adverse social consequences of own alcohol use” from the Standardized Measurement of Alcohol-Related Troubles (SMART), a set of guidelines for the standardisation of drinking population surveys in Europe (23).”

The self-report nature of these questions has been highlighted as a limitation in the discussion, see line 376, p.18.

Comment five: This has been corrected and the sentence now reads as “Over two-thirds (69.1%, n=2997) of those who consumed alcohol in the last 12 months also consumed alcohol in the week prior to the survey”

Comment six: Both these errors have been corrected in the reference section.

Comment seven: All double spaces in the document have been removed.

Comment eight: Acronyms have been clarified at the end of each table, and definitions of “occasional HED” and “monthly HED” have been provided under tables and figures.

Reviewer 2

Comment 1: This change has been made to the relevant lines.

Comment 2: The harms questions in this study are based on the seven “adverse social consequences of own alcohol use” questions included in the Standardized Measurement of Alcohol-Related Troubles (SMART), a set of guidelines for the standardisation of drinking population surveys in EU. A sentence on this information has been added to the methods section, p10. Line 196:

“These questions were based on the “adverse social consequences of own alcohol use” from the Standardized Measurement of Alcohol-Related Troubles (SMART), a set of guidelines for the standardisation of drinking population surveys in Europe (23).”

Harms such as involvement of the child in the welfare system or being pregnant are serious harms that can arise from alcohol use, and we would give consideration to inclusion of these questions in future iterations of the survey. However, this paper was focused on harms to self from own drinking in the last 12 months. Harms such as the involvement of a child in a welfare system might be more relevant in study exploring alcohol’s harms to others.

Comment 3: A question on whether respondents had dependent children was not included in the survey and so could not be included in the analyses. This is an important point and something that we would strongly consider adding to the study protocol if a survey similar to the National Alcohol Diary Survey is carried out in Ireland in the future.