Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 0 Date: 22 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Ann McDermott

Reviewer's report:

The article reads well. It is easy to follow the information presented in each section, including the data and results (effective use of tables and figures), and conclusions.

I offer a few discretionary suggestions to facilitators readers understanding, especially those less familiar with the topic. Also, some minor edits are needed (a spelling error, formatting, consistency).

1. A discretionary suggestion to draw the reader's eye to the drinking categories and highlight important factors: under Methods - I offer the suggestion that the four classifications of drinker (starting at line 183) be presented in a text box to highlight this important information. Also, that 'Alcohol-related harms' (line 198) be listed in a format to highlight these variables, such as bullet points or be numbered.

2. Spelling error line 43: I believe 'preformed' should read 'performed'.

3. Consistency is needed in reporting numbers: in the tables, some cells include a comma when reporting numbers in the thousands, while other numbers lack a comma. Ex: Table 3: 'n=1,276' and '927-1318'. Please check all table cells that report values and format consistently.

4. Question: how is 'harm to health' determined by the survey take? Does this refer to blacking out, or falling, or experiencing a hangover, or does this refer to receiving a clinical diagnosis, such as fatty liver disease?

5. Line 150: the sentence currently starts with a number (69.1%). An accepted protocol for sentence structure is that a number be written as a word when leading a sentence. Can this sentence be edited so that either 69.1% is written as words, or the sentence is restructured so that it does not begin with a number?

6. References: #5 is incomplete- the reference lacks the issue and pages.
7. Please run a spacing check throughout the paper. The justified format makes it a bit tricky for me to where all double spaces occur, but I do see the title of Figure 1 has a double space.

8. Table and figures should be able to be free-standing from the narrative. Acronyms should be clarified in footnotes at the end of tables or sets of figures (i.e. HED, RSOD), as should definitions (ex: 'occasional binge') to enable the reader to easily interpret each.

It was a pleasure to review this paper. The information presented can inform evidence-based policy development in Ireland.

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?  
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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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