Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence, distribution and social determinants of tobacco use in 30 Sub-Saharan African Countries

Version: 3 Date: 1 October 2014

Reviewer: Gary A Giovino

Reviewer's report:

Comments 1-6 below are major compulsory revisions:

1. Regarding comment #1: The authors continue to misrepresent GATS, by claiming that it does not report SLT use separately (citing reference 19). GATS reports smokeless separately in the 2012 Lancet paper (Giovino et al) and on the GATS website.

2. Regarding comment 2: your edit is still wrong. FCTC = Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

3. Regarding comment 3: Your analysis of males aged 40 and over is imprecise. You should create a category that is 40-49 and report the data for all nations and then, for countries that have data for people older than age 49 create a variable entitled 50+.

4. Regarding comment 7: the authors prioritize the criterion of consistency over the criterion of accuracy. In science, accuracy should come first and the verbiage can then be re-crafted to keep things consistent. For males, your Odds Ratios do not reflect "times higher" they reflect odds that are X times higher. The verbiage is incorrect as currently written.

5. Regarding comment 8: the "15-49(64)" in the Methods section of the abstract needs to be fixed accordingly, given the need for re-analysis indicated in comment 3 above.

6. Regarding comment 20: you cannot discern from one cross-sectional study if you have an age effect (i.e., people continued to initiate as they go older) or a cohort effect (i.e., smoking was less likely to be initiated in more recent decades).

7. Regarding comment 21: There are dozens if not hundreds of studies on smoking as an appetite suppressant. In addition to those, here are two citations that might be helpful:

Peter Boyle and his colleagues describe an effect on page 248 in Tobacco: Science, Policy, and Public Health (2010) (see: http://books.google.com/books?id=zoinrErcdnC&pg=PA248&lpg=PA248&dq=suppression+of+hunger+as+a+reason+to+use+tobacco&sourc...QsVI_0B9atyASH4YCgAw&ved=0CEAQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=suppression%20of%20hunger%20as%20a%20reason%20to%20use%20tobacco&f=false.

There is another on how the tobacco industry added appetite suppressants to cigarettes at: http://eurpub.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/04/07/eurpub.ckr023.full.pdf+html
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.