Reviewer’s report

Title: Socio-ecological influences on adolescent (aged 10-17) alcohol use and linked unhealthy eating behaviours: protocol for a systematic review and synthesis of qualitative studies

Version: 0 Date: 02 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Timothy Grigsby

Reviewer’s report:

Overall impressions

This review aims to provide a systematic evaluation of qualitative evidence on adolescent alcohol use and unhealthy eating behaviors in order to inform interventions that will curtail lifelong consequences of these behaviors in adolescence. While the methods are satisfactory to achieving the stated purpose the authors should provide a stronger theoretical rationale for their work and discuss the potential implications of this work on future multiple health behavior change interventions. Specific comments by section follow.

Background

The introduction discusses drinking establishments as a setting where unhealthy eating and alcohol use behavior occur, but it is unclear why this is mentioned if the study population consists of minors (generally speaking) who do not have legal access to such establishments in many higher income countries.

After reading the introduction in whole, I was not clear on whether the research was exploring common underlying factors that influence alcohol use behavior OR eating behavior or if the authors are interested in what influences concurrent alcohol use AND eating behaviors. This should be made clear to the reader after the first paragraph.

Prior to stating the objectives, the authors should make a clear and cohesive argument for excluding survey-based research and focusing only on qualitative research. What are they trying to find that could not be ascertained via survey?

Methods

The second inclusion criteria states that "inclusion will not be restricted by publication status" to avoid the risk of publication bias. While I can understand the authors concern for this bias, are they less concerned with the alternative of including research that has not been scrutinized by peers prior to publication in some form or another. A clear rationale for this decision should be made as I view the latter as more problematic than the former.
Data collection and extraction - The authors describe the data that will be extracted, but it is unclear what "populations" refers to. Are the authors planning on extracting demographic information (average age, % male/female, education level, etc.) or are they going to report something as simple as sample size. This should be clarified for the reader.

Quality Assessment - The authors should consider including a sentence explaining the Critical Skills Appraisal Programme for readers who are not familiar how CASP is implemented or why it should be used.

Data synthesis - The title of the review refers to "socio-ecological influences" but it is unclear how the socioecological model will theoretically relate to the objectives of the research study and extraction of themes from the included studies.

Discussion

Cancer is mentioned as an underlying reason for the review being carried out but this should have been made clear in the introduction.

Given the challenges of multiple behavior change programs to show results (see references below), the authors should discuss how the finding of this review can contribute to theory driven multiple behavior change programs:


Tables

Table 1 - How are the design and research type sections different. If you search for the design terms listed you will find the same articles. If you were to drop the design and keep research type, I would suggest combining some of the terms and search for "qualitative" OR "mixed methods" OR "ethnography" OR "interview" etc. The analysis and research terms in the research type section are redundant and likely won't add to the findings.

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Acceptable

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