Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of glass shape on alcohol consumption in a naturalistic setting: a feasibility study

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Reviewer: Lucy Gell

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Understanding of the potential for choice architecture interventions to reduce alcohol consumption is limited. As such, this paper begins to fill a gap in the evidence base around understanding the effectiveness of choice architecture in on-trade drinking environments. The findings of the feasibility study are interesting and there is potential for this to be developed into an informative paper. However, I do feel that there are a number of issues around clarity and coherence that need addressing before the paper could be published.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. I do not feel that the methods are described in enough detail to allow others to replicate the work. For example, how were the pubs (and brewer) approached? Was participation voluntary? Additionally, on page 8 the authors mention another study that this feasibility study was tagged on to. What is this other study? How might the support of landlords differ in the absence of this ‘other study’ that included some free publicity for them?

2. I am concerned that, at the end of the methods, the authors describe using informal interviews to garner feedback on the effectiveness of the study… 1) it would be useful to have more detail on how these were carried out, by who, was data audio recorded, etc…? and 2) in-depth interviews cannot elicit data on the effectiveness of the study – the authors need to be clearer about what they used the qualitative data for in the context of this study.

3. It would be useful to summarise what appeared to work well and what challenges were encountered at the start of the results and discussion section. At present, it is difficult to appreciate how successful the feasibility study was because problems encountered are scattered throughout the paper. For example, on page 7 it is mentioned that one public house could not accept the curved glasses because they would not fit in the dishwasher, and later in ‘Future studies’ it is mentioned that 2 pubs did not use the curved glasses provided. Why did this second pub not use the glasses?

4. There is a lack of critical reflection on what worked well/or not and why in the discussion. What are the limitations of this feasibility study? For example, the study only worked with 3 pubs from 1 brewer. How much can this tell you about how feasible such a study would be in a larger organisation/multiple organisations?
5. On page 10 (paragraph 3), the authors state ‘the findings are consistent with the possibility that the shape of the glass that alcohol is served in can have an effect on takings’. The authors should reconsider the appropriateness of making any statements about the effect of the intervention on alcohol consumption (see page 5, paragraph 3) based on the research described (e.g. only 3 pubs, 2 did not fully comply with the intervention).

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The research is focused on how feasible it is to examine the impact of glass shape on alcohol consumption in a pub setting. This is clear in the abstract but less clear in the Introduction of the paper. Given that the authors focus on a few specific aspects of feasibility (e.g. logistical considerations and compliance), it would be useful to more clearly define the specific objectives of the research following the research aim in the Introduction.

2. The Introduction provides a sound overview of the background research and justifies why this research is needed. However, where the authors state ‘To date, however, choice architecture interventions…’ at the end of paragraph 2, it would be useful to say more about the focus/context/findings of the ‘limited number of studies’ that are focused on changing alcohol use. This would make it clearer for the reader exactly what has been done before.

3. The authors state that monetary takings were an acceptable proxy for alcohol consumption (page 9, paragraph 2). This statement needs referencing.

4. I am unclear as to what happened regarding the glass exchange (again this could be made explicit in the methods). In particular, on page 7 (paragraph 2) the storage of glasses during the study period is highlighted as a potential logistical issue. On page 8 (paragraph 2) the authors discuss providing no reimbursement except being supplied with new glasses at the end of the study. 1) Isn’t providing new glasses a form of reimbursement? And 2) why is storage of old glasses (page 7) an issue if they get new glasses at the end of the study?

Discretionary Revisions

1. The phrase ‘counterbalanced’ is used to describe how the types of glass used were changed between the pubs during the study. What does this actually mean? Did all 3 pubs start with one type and then switch?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.