

## Reviewer's report

**Title:** A new smokefree law increased quitline calls for a six month period

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 1 December 2006

**Reviewer:** Stanton Glantz

### Reviewer's report:

General

This paper uses information on the volume of calls to the New Zealand toll-free telephone Quit line over a period of several years to demonstrate an increase in call volume and requests for nicotine replacement therapy during the 6 months before and 6 months after a 100% smokefree law went into effect. The authors control for some, but not all, anti-smoking advertising that was conducted at the time.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

There are several problems with the analytical approach in this paper.

First, the statistical methods themselves are not well described. They need to be.

Second, this is a time series analysis. An analytical approach specifically for time series data needs to be used. Simply reporting rate ratios is not acceptable.

Third, the way in which the effects of the media campaign for the Quit line is incorporated into the statistical model is not clear.

Fourth, the authors do not include the effects of anti-tobacco media advertising that was not specifically directed at the Quit line. This is a serious admission, because this advertising may have had an effect on stimulating calls even though the Quit line was not explicitly promoted. The authors should integrate this variable into the model, probably as a separate variable or as a fraction of total advertising. (Multicollinearity may be a problem; the authors should check carefully for this.)

Finally, the authors note that there was substantial press (free media) coverage of the issue. If possible, it would be nice to include this effect in the model.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The number of tables could probably be reduced and the Discussion shortened.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

None.

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.