# PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form (see an example) and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.  Some articles will have been accepted based in part or entirely on reviews undertaken for other BMJ Group journals. These will be reproduced where possible.

## ARTICLE DETAILS

| TITLE (PROVISIONAL) | The Net Effect of Smoking on Healthcare and Welfare Costs. A Cohort Study. |
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| AUTHORS | Tiihonen, Jari; Ronkainen, Kimmo; Kangasharju, Aki; Kauhanen, Jussi |

## VERSION 1 - REVIEW

| REVIEWER | Frank A. Sloan, Ph.D. J. Alexander McMahon Professor of Health Policy and Management Professor of Economics<br><br>I have no conflicting interests, financial or otherwise. |
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| REVIEW RETURNED | 25-Jul-2012 |

| THE STUDY | The paper mentions the Manning et al. study but not in any detail. Other studies form the U.S. are not discussed for example, a book by Sloan et al. the price of smoking does much of what the paper says has not been done before. There is also the work of Kip Viscusi which is relevant to this paper. The authors might have used propensity score matching to make treatment and control groups more comparable. the discussion of statistical methods is too brief. |
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| RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS | The authors do not seem to be very aware of the work done in the U.S. This work uses national longitudinal samples rather than a longitudinal sample from one city in Finland. A strength the paper is that there is such a long follow-up period. |

| REVIEWER | Peck, Richard University of Illinois at Chicago, Economics Department<br><br>No conflicts. |
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| REVIEW RETURNED | 31-Aug-2012 |

| RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS | The paper is interesting and the findings are important. The one problem is that the discussion on why governments do not set taxes higher does not follow from the analysis in the rest of the paper. It is an important question but requires careful study. It is a question of political economy - how governments respond or do not respond to pressures from various stakeholders: tobacco companies, smokers, non-smokers and other groups. I would ask the authors to say that this question - why cigarette taxes are so low - remains open and a topic for further research. This is the only flaw/problem that I see in the paper. |
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## VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer 1: We thank Dr. Sloan for his valuable comments, which we have taken into account (indicated by track change mode) in the new version at the manuscript. The reason for not including the study by Sloan et al. (new reference n:o 17) and Viscusi (new reference n:o 18) was that neither of these studies are included in PubMed data base (which we used to survey the literature). We have used now propensity score method and added text on statistical methods.

Reviewer 2: We thank Dr. Peck for his valuable and positive comments. We have now modified the Discussion, stating that the question of low cigarette taxes remains open and a topic for further research (indicated by track change mode).

## VERSION 2 – REVIEW

| REVIEWER | Richard M. Peck <br> Associate Professor <br> Economics Department <br> University of Illinois at Chicago <br> United States |
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| REVIEW RETURNED | 09-Nov-2012 |

| RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS | The explanations provided for government behavior (lines 27-30) come across as naive and a little amateurish. Another explanation is that governments are reacting to pressure from cigarette companies and smokers (either implicit or explicit) which prevents tax increases. This can be easily fixed. |
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## VERSION 2 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

COMMENT: Reviewer: Richard M. Peck, Associate Professor, Economics Department, University of Illinois at Chicago, United States

The explanations provided for government behavior (lines 27-30) come across as naive and a little amateurish. Another explanation is that governments are reacting to pressure from cigarette companies and smokers (either implicit or explicit) which prevents tax increases. This can be easily fixed.

ANSWER: We thank Dr. Peck for his valuable comment. We have now modified the text (Introduction, the 1st paragraph, last three lines).