

Reviewer's report

Title: Eating Habits and Obesity among Lebanese University Students

Version: 1 **Date:** 26 May 2008

Reviewer: Apolinaras Zaborskis

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

At first glance the title of the paper seems very promising as it is little known about eating habits and obesity prevalence among young people in Near East countries. Therefore the paper is limited in several aspects; even if some of them are indicated by authors in "Limitations" section:

1. A sample of students was drawn from just one university, which as authors state differs by students of higher socio-economic standards. This sample could not be representative for the whole country students. Sample size is minimal (220 cases). Information about selection of students is scarce.

2. Data analysis is limited to estimations of means or percentages of selected variables. Only gender comparison of data is provided. Any hypotheses about relationship between overweight and eating behaviour were not tested.

3. There are a lot of disagreements in the text. E.g. In Conclusion it is stated "the prevalence rate of overweight and obesity in studied sample was low..." but Results demonstrate this prevalence (in boys) as $37.5\% + 12.5\% = 50\%$. Does 50% demonstrate low prevalence? Or, in Results the authors state that "alcohol intake and smoking habit were not common among students". Therefore 21.9% of boys and 14.5% of girls reported that alcohol used "two or three times per week" (probably and more often. Smoking prevalence was 37.7%, isn't it?

4. The questionnaire on Lifestyle Practices is not standardized and comparable with international studies. What is importance of the question "How often do you eat with friends and family?" Moreover, there are two different things combined into one question. What is importance of just one question about opinion "What type of food...? What kind of alcoholic beverages authors had in mind asking about drinking of alcohol?

Because of these limitations the paper seems as "student's home work" and does not have appropriate scientific level.

- Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

1. Data Analysis. Probably authors have used the ANOVA to compare means of anthropometrical characteristics.

2. The SD for weight seems too big and for height (0.1 cm !!!) too small.
3. Table 1. Testing of difference between males and females is needed.
4. Table 2. Statistical assessment (e.g. Chi squared) is needed. A column for Total is also suggested.
5. Table 3. There are missing data on Smoking. Categories of response to question about alcohol use should be ranked. Categories to indicate frequency of eating habits do not include all possible responses (e.g. six or five times per week, never).
6. Citation in the text must be in sequence. References do not fulfil requirements (e.g. reference 8 and 9, and others).
7. Discussion should have at least a structured format. In general, it repeats the data that have been already presented in Results. Discussion about national peculiarities of eating habits are scarce.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests