

Author's response to reviews

Title: Childhood Obesity, Prevalence and Prevention

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Author's response to reviews: see over

Dear Dr Kumagai,
Deputy-Editor-in-Chief, Nutrition J

Re: MS: 1061760327715006: Childhood Obesity, Prevalence and Prevention

On behalf of my co-authors and myself I would like to thank you for considering the manuscript for publication in *Nutrition Journal*. I also would like to thank the reviewer for the very constructive comments which improved the quality of the manuscript. A point-by-point answer is prepared as follows.

Reviewer's comments and answers:

1. Abstract: In general, the abstract doesn't represent the authors' views very well. It lacks focus. The 2 sentences (lines 11-12) on the role of reduced physical activity and increased "calorie and fat" intake need rewriting. It should be made clear that both over-consumption of calories and reduced physical activity are involved in childhood obesity. Also, it is incorrect to specifically identify fat as a cause of obesity since children also obtain excessive calories from sugar and other high carbohydrate energy dense foods and drinks. The literature has many original articles on this point. In fact, in page 9, the authors make this point. Also p.8, explains this quite well, and should be used in the abstract.

A1: Corrected as suggested.

2. Abstract, last sentence: There is no conclusion on how clinicians and the health care system should proceed. In fact, it is not clear in the abstract what the purpose of the article is. The authors have good ideas for obesity prevention (see pp11-15), and these should be used in the abstract.

A2: Corrected as suggested.

3. Introduction: The section on obesity globally is interesting. The authors should consider putting in a table the summarizes this information in a standard format.

A3: Corrected as suggested. The information has been summarized in Table 1.

4. p.6, lines 3-4. It is not clear what is meant by “This could support use of age and gender references instead of BMI.”

A4: The sentence has been deleted.

5. p.6, lines 15-17. The authors appear to support use of waist circumference in children. What cutpoints do they use to identify abnormality or morbidity? Are age and sex specific values needed to use waist circumference in children?

A5: To the best of our knowledge there is no publication on specific cut off points for waist circumference, but there are some ongoing studies (comments included in the manuscript).

6. p.9, second paragraph. I am concerned by the authors’ uncritical acceptance of the hypothesis that milk and calcium intake promote weight loss and protect against development of obesity. The dairy industry is heavily promoting this. The authors should write a balanced paragraph on this controversial idea. The authors’ idea that sugar-containing soft drinks promote weight gain because they displace dairy products is preposterous given their very large caloric load and minimal satiety.

A6. The paragraph has been changed and the following sentence has been added to it: “While it is possible that drinking soda instead of milk would result in higher intake of total energy, it cannot be concluded definitively that sugar containing soft drinks promote weight gain because they displace dairy products”.

7. p.14, second paragraph. The second sentence seems internally contradictory: “An economic idea is to apply a small tax (too small to affect sales) on high-volume foods...” What is the purpose of the tax if it is “too small to affect sales”.

A7. The sentence has been changed to “A small tax (but large enough to affect sales) on high-volume foods...”.

8. Page 11-15 reviews what to do to reduce obesity in children. It is well-written, informative section. This should be used for the abstract which lacks focus. I also suggest that the authors summarize this section in a table or illustration with “bulleted points”.

A8: Corrected as suggested. The information has been summarized in Table 2.

9. p.16, conclusion. The Conclusion has the same problem as Abstract. It does not express the authors' conclusions that flow from the rest of the manuscript but contains vague statements that emphasize some largely irrelevant methodological issues. It should be rewritten.

A9: Corrected as suggested. The Conclusion has been re-written.

Thank you.