Reviewer's report

Title: Barriers to successful recruitment of parents of overweight children for an obesity prevention intervention: a qualitative study among youth health care professionals

Version: 2 Date: 11 January 2012

Reviewer: Karin Hannes

Reviewer's report:

Major revision:

- The type of qualitative research design has not been mentioned, which makes it difficult to evaluate whether the study has been conducted according to the state of the art.

- The abstract and report states that parents were the main factor. How has this particular ‘weight’ been assigned to this particular finding? In fact, stating that parents may be the largest obstacles in the background section may have led to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Could you make a stronger scientific case for your conclusion as well? Your citation table and the categories described in it does not fully seem to adjust for this conclusion. What exactly leads the authors to conclude that parents are the main factor?

Furthermore, if you speak to providers instead of parents themselves, is it not to be expected that they would have an external locus of control? To me, this would be one of the potential risks that impacts on the credibility of your final conclusion.

- If a variety of obstacles to the recruitment of children and parents have already been identified, then why is the research necessary? Make a case for your study, e.g. by pointing out how your setting differs from the previous settings or how your target group may provide additional information, or by stating that previously conducted research was mainly quantitative or…?

- The selective sampling strategy is considered a limitation, which makes me wonder which particular sampling strategy has been used? Information on this strategy (apart from a description of the actions) or a statement on whether or not the research subjects in the sample volunteered to take part has not been given.

- The discussion lacks an indication of what was new in this study compared to the previously conducted studies mentioned in the background.

- How is the theoretical base a strength? It does seem to confirm what was already known (parents are the main factor). So what ‘richness’ is added to the findings by using qualitative research (which is also perceived as a strength)?

Minor essential revisions:
-P 3: if the parents are expected to be by the largest obstacles, then why are the providers used as the research subjects? Provide a rationale, apart from stating that it is a limitation of the study.

-If you consider having conducted interviews by the same interviewer and analysed by two different ones a strength, state why. What extra value did you add by doing this (think credibility, confirmability, transparency, neutrality etc.).

-the use of “the respondents” or “the interviewees” seems to suggest that ALL of them supported a particular statement. I did not find any evidence for that in the presentation of results. But if this is the case use “All respondents” instead of “the respondents”.

-Provide supporting citations in the text or in the table, not both. If you choose the latter strategy, adapt the text so that it stands without the in-text citations.

Discretionary revisions:

-Socially desirable answers seems like a weak argument in the limitations section. This might be the case for questionnaires or any other research technique. If you really have the impression that this was the case during the interviews or a considerable risk, state some of the reasons. If it was the case one of the potential reasons might be that the interviewer did not succeed in creating a safe enough climate for the conversation.

Declaration of competing interests:

I hereby declare that I have no conflicts of interest.