Reviewer's report

Title: Assessment of weight-related factors of adolescents by private practitioners

Version: 1 Date: 29 July 2013

Reviewer: Norbert Donner-Banzhoff

Reviewer's report:

The paper does address a relevant public health problem, i.e. overweight in adolescents. There is an impressive data base of more than 13,000 students, who were asked to recall treatment by their primary care providers.

My main concern is with values underlying this research. The paper implies that checking adolescents' weight is important and should be done on a regular basis. Here I have my doubts. In my view, overweight or obese people know that they are obese. They don't need objective confirmation by health professionals. I am afraid it will add to their negative experience and damaged self-confidence without practitioners having effective “treatments” to offer. In my view, obesity is a public health problem. Clinicians have only a minor role, such as counselling those who have made a decision to lose weight. In that context, such as a prespecified plan, assessment of weight makes sense, but not across the board.

The data suggest that this is indeed what’s happening in practice.

The way health professionals’ behaviours were assessed is a potential source of bias. The investigators relied on reporting by adolescents. This applied to physicians' behavior as well as results of their measurements. As a result, the number of missing values was high. About bias we can only speculate, the authors rightly acknowledge this.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Well described but not appropriate
3. Are the data sound?
   High proportion of missing values, high potential for bias
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   No, see my comments
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
As far as I know YES
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
yes
9. Is the writing acceptable?
The paper would need some English language editing.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests