Reviewer's report

Title: Influence of a multidisciplinary approach and intense follow-up on weight reduction in a primary care setting

Version: 1 Date: 31 July 2004

Reviewer: J J van Binsbergen

Reviewer's report:

General
1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
There is no research question defined. The idea is not new but important. The authors suggest a study to compare a intensive family physician based intervention with the routine daily practice. But in fact they compare a drug intervention (group A+B) with a non-pharmacological intervention (group C). So there are several variables: family physician with dietician and medication, family physician alone in a different time schedule plus medication and dietician alone without medication.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
No. It is not clear e.g. what kind of training (mentioned in the discussion) was given to the family physicians. This is crucial information to extrapolate the outcomes to the daily practice of the ordinary family physician.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
As far as I (being a peer-reviewer) can see without the rough data, I think so.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Considering my other remarks I think so. A general question is nevertheless: did a medical ethical committee give approval?

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
The discussion on the whole is a repeat of the background paragraph. The authors should go into the pro and cons of their results compared with the literature. The advantage of intervention by the family physician is mentioned endless but without supporting references. The already named training and the consequences.
The fact that a relative high percentage stopped the treatment isn’t discussed at all. The lack of a critical consideration about the short-term effect versus the long-term lifestyle change (while mentioned in the introduction) makes this study one of many. The conclusion is that intensive follow up: with trained family physician plus dietician plus medication every fortnight is better than monthly the dietician alone.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
No. It would be better if the title includes the drug-intervention

7. Is the writing acceptable?
As far as I can judge: yes.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
First: The title should include the pharmacological-intervention background of the study. Second: Reconsider the three groups. Compare A+B with control group C. Or compare A with B with control group C. Make a clear choice and persevere that line in the whole manuscript. Third: Describe the family physicians’ training and write a critical discussion without repeating well known overweight arguments.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No