Reviewer’s report

Title: The relationship between obesity and Diabetic nephropathy in China

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Reviewer: Indranil Dasgupta

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This study attempts to answer an important question - how obesity influences progression of diabetic nephropathy in a Chinese population. It suggests that whilst in the early stages obesity has detrimental effect, it may be protective in patients with more advanced DN.

However, it is a retrospective study with several limitations. One important limitation is that the authors excluded 493 out of 752 patients with biopsy proven diabetic nephropathy. This makes one wonder how representative the final sample was. The authors at least could have shown that there were no differences in baseline characteristics between excluded patients and the ones enrolled in the study.

The authors also need to mention how many (%) patients had type 1 diabetes.

The renal biopsies were reported by nephrologists rather than histopathologists. This introduces bias and also makes one wonder how firm the histological diagnoses were. Did they look for Obesity Related Glomerulopathy? I suspect many of the obese diabetic patients might have had ORG and this may explain the difference in rate of progression CKD between lean and over-weight/ obese patients.

The over-weight and obese lost significant amount of weight during the follow up period and this may also explain the slower progression of kidney disease in this group as weight loss has been shown to slow progression of CKD in the past.

The authors have not discussed the limitations or strengths of the study explicitly.

The discussion needs to be extensively re-written.

Finally, there are a number of typographical and grammatical mistakes that need to be corrected.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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'