Reviewer’s report

Title: The risk of obesity by assessing infant growth against the UK-WHO charts: findings from the Born in Bradford birth cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 2 April 2012

Reviewer: Michael A Preece

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I think this is an important article underlining the difference between a growth reference and a growth standard, as the authors state and highlighting the pitfalls that may apply if they are used without understanding the differences.

Minor essential revisions

1) The analytical methods used are appropriate, but the description is a bit too brief. To a reader familiar with multi-level modelling it is quickly clear that that is what has been done. To anyone else this may not be at all clear (other than from the appropriate reference [21]). I think they need to spell out a bit more clearly the advantages of this analysis.

2) They do not enter into a discussion of whether the ‘discovery’ of more worrisome BMI gain trajectories with the UK-WHO standards is a genuine reflection of a worrying trend in the studied population or that the UK-WHO standards are inappropriate for the study children. Their data may not allow an opinion, but I think it could be addressed a little more clearly.

Discretionary Revisions

Much of the philosophy about growth references versus standards was addressed some 30 years ago, and I think this should be quoted (Goldstein H and Tanner JM, Ecological considerations in the creation and the use of child growth standards; Lancet: 315, 582-585).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests