Author's response to reviews

Title: The Problem of Obesity Among Adolescents in Hong Kong: A Comparison Using Various Diagnostic Criteria

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir

Re: MS: 4147174341530927: The Problem of Obesity Among Adolescents in Hong Kong: A Comparison Using Various Diagnostic Criteria (previously: The Problem of Childhood Obesity in Hong Kong - A Cross-Sectional Observation Study)

Thank you very much for your email reply on 11 Dec 2007. We are grateful that you and your Editorial Board are interested in our paper and allow us to resubmit it after revision. We have valued comments from the reviewers and made revisions accordingly. A summary of all the revisions are attached at the end of the letter.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,

(signed)____________________

Gary TC Ko, for all authors
Response to reviewers’ comments:

Reviewer 1 (A Musaiger) –

- Abstract: Both Methods and Results are revised.
- Background: A brief discussion was made on the obesity prevalence in China and worldwide (P.3, 2nd paragraph). The purpose and purpose of the study was elaborated (P.3, last 5 lines).
- Methods: The randomization sampling making use of computer-generated coding system was stated on P.4, 2nd paragraph. Concerning the 4 diagnostic criteria, since they are crucial to the analysis, we think a description of each criterion is essential to facilitate the reader to read our results.
- Results: The prevalence of overweight and obesity were added in Table 2. The sample for age 11 was omitted in Table 2 and explained in Results (P.6, Results session, 2nd paragraph).
- Discussion: The first paragraph of Discussion is important in elaborating to the readers the sampling method of the study (now on P.7, last paragraph). The difference in the prevalence of obesity by various criteria was further discussed (P.9, 2nd paragraph and P.10, first 3 paragraphs).
- References: More relevant references were added (Refs 8, 9, 22-25).
- Title: This is now modified as suggested.

Reviewer 2 (L Dolan) –

1) Only 14 of 53 schools participated: We agreed this bit of information is important. We have discussed this issue on P.7 last 2 lines to P.8 first 3 lines.
2) Distribution of number at each age: This is now added (see Table 2).
3) Comparison of data: The present analysis is based on a cross-sectional study, hence, data comparison at different time points is not available, in particular, those figures based on IOTF, COTF or CDC criteria. However, we have compared the obesity rates in Hong Kong by HKGS criteria reported in 1998 and 2001 (P.10, 2nd and 3rd paragraphs).
4) Periodically reviewing obesity definition: We agree this has its own drawback. This is now stated in P.9, 1st paragraph, last 2 lines.
5) The purpose and purpose of the study: This was elaborated in the Background (P.3, last 5 lines) as well as the Discussion.

Reviewer 3 (K Ong) –

1. Abstract, focus of the paper: This is now revised in Method and Results sessions.
2. IOTF vs. COTF criteria: This was discussed on P.9, 2nd paragraph, last 3 lines.
3. Original survey results by HKGS criteria: This was elaborated on Discussion, P.10, 2nd paragraph.
4. Change of overweight/obesity with age: This was discussed on P.9, 2nd paragraph, last 5 lines.
5. Measurements of children: Successful anthropometric measurements were conducted in all children who consented for study (Results, 1st paragraph).