Reviewer’s report

**Title:** The Problem of Adolescent Obesity in Hong Kong: A Cross-Sectional Observation Study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 7 December 2007

**Reviewer:** Ken Ong

**Reviewer’s report:**

These authors have assessed the prevalence of obesity in over 2000 adolescents from randomly selected schools in Hong Kong. The prevalence according to various international criteria was around 2 to 6%. In contrast the prevalence was much higher if 1993 Hong Kong criteria were used.

Major comments

1. It is unclear from the abstract whether the main focus of the paper is to assess the correlation between various international criteria, or to explore time trends within Hong Kong, or simply to assess the current prevalence. Some acknowledgement should be made of the marked variation according to age.

2. With regard to comparisons between the various international criteria, a more critical interpretation of their data would be that IOTF criteria results in a not insignificant 30 to 40% lower estimate of overweight and obesity compared to the others. This is not surprising as by definition the IOTF corresponds to adult BMIs of 25 and 30, while the COTF uses 24 and 28.

3. With regard to differences from Hong Kong schoolchildren in 1993, the use of weight for height makes it more difficult to assess the degree of difference from the 1993 population. What was the prevalence of obesity in that original survey?

4. Figure 1 shows a startling rise in prevalence of overweight in boys and girls with decreasing age. Is there any evidence that this reflects a marked secular trend? Alternatively it could reflect earlier pubertal development compared to the reference populations.

5. Did any children opt out of measurements and if so how many?

**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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a
statistician.

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