Reviewer’s report

Title: Exclusive breastfeeding of Swedish children and possible influence on development of obesity: a prospective cohort study.

Version: 3 Date: 21 June 2008

Reviewer: Wendy H Oddy

Reviewer’s report:

BMC Pediatrics

Exclusive breastfeeding of Swedish children and possible influence on development of obesity: a prospective cohort study

This is a study to examine the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and obesity when potential confounders such as socioeconomic factors are considered. There are no page numbers included in the manuscript so it makes it very difficult to comment, and state where my comments are referring to.

English language is a problem with this paper - although the paper itself is acceptable the English language sometimes is not.

Decimal places should be ‘full-stop marks’ not commas.

Abstract specific comments:

Results: line 1 – should read 12.9% of the children in the study. However, sentences should not start with a number so this sentence should be re-worded.

What method of analysis was used, how variables were defined? Even if brief, further detail should be included in the abstract.

Background (is this page 1 – there are no page numbers on pages!!):
Page 1 – 2nd line – there should be a space before reference [4]
Page 1 - Line 4, the word ‘also’ should follow the word ‘breastfeeding’.
Page 1, line 5 should read ‘…role in this development [7-10]..’

Final sentence in background needs re-wording. It should read ‘In four of the nine studies analysed in the review an inverse association between breastfeeding (mostly never vs. ever) duration and obesity was observed [21’.

Methods:
Line 3 under participants and design – ‘ABIS study is’... should be ‘ABIS study was’...
Line 6 – do not start a sentence with a number (10 836 families…)
Lines 9-12 – re-word in correct English – line 9 remove the word ‘used’ (before
parameters).

Final sentence on this page that reads ‘…country of birth, be smokers and more often…’ should read ‘country of birth, be smokers and were more often…’

Tables should be placed at the back of the manuscript

Table 1 – how many boys and girls were overweight and obese separated from each other, or was overweight and obese categories used?

Methods page 2 (following table 1) – again use ‘were’ rather than ‘are’

Are references 14, 23 and 24 correct here? Do the authors mean to include these references here?

The next paragraph that reads ‘… The questionnaires were distributed by the nurses…’ should read as follows “

The 150-item questionnaires were distributed by the nurses at the Child Health Service. All participating children with data on each question were used in separate analyses. This explains why the number of participants differs between the different analyses’

Has a statistician checked the result presented by the authors?

Data collection and analysis

Rather than state ‘We used questions about breastfeeding…’ state ‘we asked questions about …’

When children’s and parental weight are discussed it should be stated as to whether these are self-reported or measured.

All reference to ‘cow milk’ should be ‘cow’s milk’

Final sentence on this page – weight and height should be stated as self-reported and measured’

Next page (number?) Sentence that reads ‘…In the analysis where maternal age is used…’ should read ‘In the analysis where maternal age was used…’

Results

First sentence that states ‘Questionnaire data 1 year…’ should read

Questionnaire data one year…’ Numbers fewer than ten should be spelled out as this is the correct convention.

Throughout this paragraph, numbers should be spelled out i.e. 5 should be five, 6 should be six, unless it is in brackets.

Under Risk factors for short exclusive breastfeeding

Have the authors considered reporting results in the opposite direction that show ‘Longer exclusive breastfeeding was more common if the parents had a university degree…’
Table 2 should be placed at end of the manuscript.

Under section, Obesity at 5 years. First sentence reads ‘At 5 years of age 12.9% of the children was overweight…’ This should read ‘At 5 years of age 12.9% were overweight…’ (The percentages of overweight and obese (rather than mean BMI only, should be given in Table 1). Have the authors referenced the Cole criteria? (Cole T, 2000). The statement that there was a significant difference between BMI in normal weight children and overweight children is obvious and should be removed unless described in more detail.

Second paragraph of Obesity at 5 years of age section.

The authors state that data are not shown but is this not the main hypothesis of the study, as this is what is given in the title to this study.

Discussion

First line in this section reads ‘Obesity is quite common in Swedish children and we found 12.9% of the 5 years old children being overweight and 4.3% obese.’ This sentence should read ‘Obesity is quite common in Swedish children and we found 12.9% of the five year old children were overweight and 4.3% were obese.’

Line 5 in this section reads…” In this study 78.4%…”. This should read ‘In our study 78.4%…’

Second paragraph in this section, line 5 reads ‘Our results have been based…” should read' Our results are based on…”

Second paragraph in this section, line 7 reads ‘…low power is the reason for not finding associations between breastfeeding and obesity if breastfeeding has a clinically important protective effect.’ This sentence should read ‘…low power was the reason for no observed association between breastfeeding and obesity.’

4th last paragraph in discussion – the authors state that BMI was used as the outcome variable to determine obesity but they need to create the obesity variable for children based on the Cole criteria given the title of the paper states that obesity is the outcome.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

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