Reviewer’s report

Title: Young adolescents’ independent mobility - Related factors and association with transport to school. A cross-sectional study.

Version: 1 Date: 29 March 2010

Reviewer: Veit Grote

Reviewer’s report:

The authors try to elucidate the factors influencing the independent mobility of adolescents in an urban setting. The framework consists of basically three levels: family, individual and environment. Each level has its own impact and there is interaction between the levels resulting in a "actual mobility".

Mayor issues:

1. Operational definitions of the three levels and "actual mobility" are weak. Especially, family defined by foreigner status, home ownership and basic home environment (house/appartement) is unconvincing. The manuscript did not convince me to believe that "actual mobility" is more or less well defined by the mode of transportation to school and the Saturday walking or cycling activity.

2. Overall, the overall, concrete intention of the manuscript has to be clarified. I would agree that point 1) of the authors research question (factors influencing freedom to move) can be somewhat addressed with their study. If it is the mayor topic, the public health relevance of the potential findings has to be clearer than in the present form.

3. The text states that written consent was solicited from parents. Unless, there was also written consent from the children/adolescents I would have ethical problems.

4. The methods should be shortened and reduced to the mayor points necessary to get an basic understanding of their approach.

5. Figures/Tables should be self-explanatory, for instance in Table 1 the authors should state
   a) Classes should be named
   b) state what research question you are addressing in the figure 1

6. The discussion is redundant in many passages with repetitions of results.

7. The criteria how the five classes were actually chosen was elusive to me.

Minor issues:

1. The introduction of term "freedom to move" is awkward.

2. page 8: "Class 1:..." The meaning of the percentages and the variance is unclear.

3. Please describe Stockholm County - does it include Stockholm city?
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.