Reviewer’s report

Title: Parents’ beliefs about appropriate infant growth and feeding: implications for the prevention of childhood obesity

Version: 1 Date: 15 March 2010

Reviewer: Kristen Hurley

Reviewer’s report:

This paper “Parents’ beliefs about appropriate infant growth and feeding: implication for the prevention of childhood obesity” reports on a qualitative study that aims to explore parents' beliefs about infant size and growth, and their receptiveness to interventions to prevent childhood obesity. Understanding in this area is extremely useful in informing future interventions to prevent childhood obesity.

The manuscript would benefit, however, from further clarification and organization. In addition, the discussion could be enhanced to provide a more accurate description of the findings. Please see comments below.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

Abstract:

Background:

• Authors might consider adding a little more in background about what is already known re: infant feeding and risk of subsequent childhood obesity.
• Aim – very clear – good

Method:

• Would consider providing more detail here (e.g. sample size, location, etc)

Background:

• Paragraph 1, line 3 – Does “31% for boys and 30% for girls” refer to rates of overweight or rates of obesity. Please clarity.
• Paragraph 1, line 6 – Might want to focus exclusively on infancy here rather than “or even earlier” given current study aim and methods.
• Paragraph 1, line 10 – Might also put sentence “An infant’s weight developmental trajectory…. “in the background section of the abstract.
• Paragraph 2 – consider removing or streamlining part about maternal obesity and pre-natal programming since it is not the focus of your study.
• Paragraph 3, line 1 – consider clarifying “less breast feeding” Does this refer to breastfeeding initiation or breastfeeding duration.
• Paragraph 4, line 1 – might want to define maternal feeding practices upfront.
Are you referring to how mother’s feed (restriction, control, etc.) or what mother’s feed (snacks, cereal, breast milk, etc)?

The author’s third objective seems to go beyond the study aim. Might remove objective 3 or broaden aim to include beliefs concerning approaches to weaning.

Sampling and Recruitment:

- Section Criteria is a bit confusing. Consider revising and clarifying (e.g. did you include communities at risk for obesity and not at risk or both, what does “high/low” denote, not sure what authors mean by “ethnicity”. What is “Reception”?
- Under “Insert Table 1” should “Health Visitors” be “Health Workers”?
- Recruitment Criteria is a bit confusing. Consider re-wording. Consider defining acronyms.

Data Collection:

- Consider moving sentence about obtaining informed consent up to previous section (Sampling and Recruitment)

Data Analysis:

- Again, use of acronyms is a bit confusing. Consider removing or defining.

Results and Discussion:

Description of sample

- First paragraph, line 2 – are authors referring to parent’s weight or infant’s weight status. Is weight measured or self-report? If self-report, consider adding to limitation section.
- Consider removing Tables 2 and 3 and consider just clearly describing demographics in text.

Themes

- Themes in this section do not match those in abstract. Consider using exact same wording.

Rationalization for infant’s larger size (again, should match that in abstract)

- Consider removing participant # after quote
- In section re: sigma and shame – did younger mother report this? Did the overweight mother’s also report this? Might be helpful to clarify.
- The sentence “There is some evidence that breastfeeding protects children…” seems out of place. Consider moving to next section.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

Parents’ understanding of breastfeed infant’s growth and age-related behavior

- Be careful when discussing breastfed infants and growth charts. Findings are controversial. Some research suggests that breastfed babies grow faster than
formula-fed babies during the first 6 months of life. Consider extending lit review and adding/discussing conflicting research.

- The relation between “rapid weight gain during infancy” and negative weight outcomes later in life are controversial. Might consider presenting both sides of debate (e.g. adding research by Cesar Victora).

Beliefs that nothing can be done about overweight/obese infants:

- Data collected is useful for future interventions. Consider adding more discussion on need for interventions that focus on healthy foods and understanding infant cues rather than weight. Comments of participants seem to endorse such interventions

Strength and Limitation
- Add as limitation is parental weight is self-report

Summary and Conclusion
- Consider removing last sentence. "Interventions also need to help them….
Seems a bit out of place.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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