Reviewer's report

Title: Social and cultural factors underlying generational differences in overweight: a cross-sectional study among ethnic minorities

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Reviewer: Ronald Stolk

Reviewer's report:

Hosper and colleagues studied the risk factors for overweight in first and second generation immigrants in the Netherlands. They did not find clear associations with the studied factors, which might be due to a number of serious flaws in the design of the study. The included participants represent about 25% of the invited population, which has probably induced selection bias. Given the age range of the participants, both the group of first generation as well as second generation seems a mixed bag to me. The number of years living in the Netherlands is not allowed for. More important, the social and cultural factors of the parents (apart from occupation) were not taken into account of those participants still living with their parents. Finally, as the authors recognize, self reported weight (used in almost half of the participants) is not a good measure of overweight. Since the cutoff value for overweight is rather arbitrary (and probably different for non-Caucasians), analyses with BMI as continuous value or using a few categories (e.g. quintiles) of BMI should be added.

In the discussion, the authors state that the high proportion of overweight is due to a “lack of beneficial effect of education”. This should be revised. The authors do not discuss that in many societies overweight is a marker of good health and more common in those with a higher social economic position.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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'