Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 13 November 2010

Reviewer: C Schooling

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This paper is much improved.
There are a few oversights that should be corrected.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

Abstract conclusions
The last sentence should be clarified to
“Further research is necessary to elucidate whether any postulated socio-biological or other processes are relevant to the opposite pattern of overweight among men”

Background
End of the first paragraph
“We did not find any studies with a similar gender difference”, i.e., where second generation migrant men are fatter than 1st generation migrant men, but 2nd generation migrant women are thinner than 1st generation migrant women. I am sorry to be persistent; however there are previous studies with exactly these findings by migrant generation. So, this sentence should be “We found no exactly similar studies, however a pattern of second generation migrant women being less centrally obese than first generation women with the opposite among men, has been seen before.”

Beginning of first paragraph
“The generational differences in body weight are likely…” should be
“The generational differences in body weight could…”

Analyses section
“First we performed all analyses separately for Turks and Morrocans to check whether there were any interaction effects for ethnicity.”
Normally, people test for interaction effects by carrying out statistical tests rather than solely be stratified analysis, so it would be clearer if this sentence was worded as
“First we performed all analyses separately for Turks and Morrocans to check that the pattern of associations was similar by ethnicity.”
Discussion

2nd paragraph

In the interests of accuracy this sentence (“Further research is necessary to explore whether the reversed pattern we found among Turkish and Morrocan young people can be generalized to other populations as well.”) in the text should either be deleted or be replaced by the one suggested below:

“Notably a similar pattern has been previously observed by migrant generation from a less to a more developed setting within an ethnic group.”

3rd paragraph

In the interests of accuracy this sentence this sentence (““Further research is necessary to evaluate whether postulated explanations as to why a higher education in male immigrants does not ‘protect’ against overweight are relevant.”) should either be deleted or be replaced by the one suggested below:

“Further research is necessary to evaluate whether postulated explanations as to why a higher education in male immigrants does not ‘protect’ against overweight are relevant.”

The paragraph starting “Other studies..” (middle of page 15) is very difficult to understand. All except the last sentence could be replaced with the following sentences or something similar

“Alternatively, it has been suggested that biological as well as social processes may be relevant to the changes that take place with improvements in living conditions either through migration from less to more economically developed environments (such as from Turkey or Morocco to the Netherlands) or more generally with economic development.2 Specifically, it has been suggested that the life long effects of better living conditions during growth may make women less prone to adiposity and men more so, via environmentally driven changes to pubertal development.2 Second generation ethnic minorities grew up in the Netherlands, whereas first generation migrants were less likely to have. Lifetime experiences may be more predictive for obesity in adulthood than a person’s current socio-economic position.

Conclusions

The last two sentences

“In second generation men, however, no explanations could be found for the higher prevalence of overweight. Further research is necessary to better understand the generational patterning and, in particular, why a higher socio-economic position of men does not ‘protect’ against overweight.”

Could be replaced by the following or something similar

“In second generation men, however, few explanations could be found for the higher prevalence of overweight. Further research is necessary to evaluate whether postulated explanations contribute to a better understanding of the generational patterning and, in particular, why a higher socio-economic position
of men may not ‘protect’ against overweight.”

Reference List


Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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'