Author's response to reviews

Title: Association between overweight, obesity and self perceived job insecurity in German employees

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Association between overweight, obesity and self perceived job insecurity in German employees
Eva Muenster, Heiko Rueger, Elke B Ochsmann, Stephan Letzel, André M Toschke

Dear editors,
Thank you for considering our paper for publication in *BMC Public Health*. We appreciate the reviewers’ constructive comments and their careful reading and have changed the manuscript according to their suggestions (bold type). According to your email from 8 Oct. 2010 we documented that the data used is openly available and improved the style of written English inasmuch as a native English speaker again checked the manuscript.

Reviewer#1: Katharina Eckert
Reviewer's report:
In generally it can be said, that there are no serious problems concerning the article.
The hypothese is clearly stated and the methods are well defined. Due to the fact that the analysis is based on secondary data, the authors have to deal with the datas given.
The manuscript adheres to the normal standards for scientific publications, but it is not very sophisticated. The data are presented in a structured and in a well comprehensible way.
The final discussion and appraisal of the results does not quite make the grate.
The reader is left alone with the ,,naked'' results because the authors do not give any advice what to do with the observed concurrence of obesity and job insecurity.
The hole study (or data analysis) shows some limitations: the data is based on self-report. This might cause a bias (socially acceptable bias). But this limitation is cited by the authors themselves as good as the other limitations of the study.
The literature on the subject is well included, the writing is easy to understand.
The title of the article shows clearly the content of the findings.

A discretionary revisions is proposed:
1. Overweight is not only a problem of over-nourishment, as it is described in the introduction. There are lots of references that show, that it's always an unlucky combination of exess nutrition and too little physical activity.
   Answer:
   Thank you for addressing this issue. We added this argumentation (including further references) in the background section (please see page 4).

2. By presenting the data: It would be helpful (to prove the practical significance of the data) to calculate the effect sizes.
   Answer:
   Thank you for bringing this up. For giving a more detailed description of the values and relations we present absolute and frequency-based results in table 1 and 2 (in order to give a possibility to compare differences in percentages); the following tables include effect sizes.

3. It would be also welcome if the authors could give some advice what to do with the observed results; e. g., what could be done in the companies to solve the
Reviewer#2: Gert Strydom
Reviewer's report:

The following comments/suggestions for the authors to consider:
A: Discretionary revisions
1. Title: The paper addresses overweight and obesity. Overweight can as well be included into the title.
   Answer:
   Thank you for this consideration. We have changed the title of the manuscript accordingly.

Abstract:
2. Background: The 2 sentences can be combined into 1. Linguistically not sound to start a new sentence with “But”.
   Answer:
   The two sentences have been combined into one (please see page 2).

Full paper.
3. Background: First sentence: Obesity and overweight are not always primarily the result of “overnourishment” – physical inactivity may also contribute to the condition.
   Answer:
   Thank you for addressing this issue. We added this argumentation (including further references) in the background section (please see page 4).

4. Methods: 2nd paragraph: …”usual age range”. Specify the usual age range which is applicable in Germany. It may differ from other countries.
   Answer:
   We added this information (please see page 6).

6. 3rd paragraph, last sentence. “self rating” instead of “self-rating”.
   Answer:
   Thank you for these corrections. We have changed the text accordingly.

7. Statistical analysis: 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence. How many dummies were created.
   Answer:
   As all variables are presented in the tables we have included a reference to table 1 and table 2 (please see page 8).

8. Results: descriptive analysis, 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence: “job loss” instead of “job-loss”.
9. Discussion: 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence. “e.g.” write in full when used in text.
10. Discussion: 2nd paragraph, 3rd sentence. …”female sex” … “female” would be sufficient.
11. Discussion: 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence. ….”could be observed for women” – earlier you refer to “female” – stay consequent. Rather refer to “female or general obesity”.
12. Discussion: 4th paragraph, 2nd sentence. …”precisely” instead of “accurately”.

problem.
Answer:
Thank you for this remark. We have explained further implications in the conclusion section (please see page 15).
B: MINOR ESSENTIAL REVIEWS
The authors should pay attention to the following:
1. Abstract: Methods. 3rd sentence.
   “Body-Mass-Index” instead of “Body Mass Index”
   “self perceived” instead of “self-perceived”
2. Full Paper: Background: 3rd paragraph … 1st sentence.
   “self perceived” instead of “self-perceived”
   Answer:
   Thank you for your careful reading and helpful remarks. We have changed the text accordingly.

3. Background: 5th paragraph…2nd sentence.
   “vicious circle” … This statement needs some clarification. What do the authors have in mind?
   Answer:
   Thank you for this hint. Our statement is now described in more detail in the background section (please see page 4 and 5) and in the conclusion section (please see page 12).

   The authors refer to the 2004 wave which included 22 109 individuals while the 2005 wave included 21 105 individuals – that adds up to 43 214 individuals. The authors stated: “By putting together the 2004 and 2005 wave … data on 20 120 individuals” were available. Needs to be described more accurately.
   Answer:
   We agree that our procedure could have been described more accurately and revised the text accordingly. By combing the 2004 and 2005 waves of the GSOEP, longitudinal data on 20,120 individuals were available for analysis. For longitudinal analyses only those (identical) individuals included in both waves of the survey can be selected.

5. Methods: 2nd paragraph… 2nd sentence.
   “self perceived” instead of “self-perceived”.
6. Methods: 3rd paragraph
   “Body-Mass-Index” instead of “Body Mass Index”.
   Answer:
   Thank you again for your careful reading and helpful suggestions. We have changed the text accordingly.

7. Biometric and social variables. 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence.
   “… range from grammar school to no school degree”. Do they mean “no schooling grade”? Degree usually has the connotation of tertiary education – but according to the table this category is lower than 9 years of compulsory schooling. Be more specific.
   Answer:
   Thank you for this helpful remark. We have specified the educational level parameter values in the method section (please see page 7) and in table 1 as follows: “grammar school (13 years)”, “secondary school (10 years), “compulsory school (9 years) and “no schooling grade”.

8. Results: 3rd paragraph… 2nd sentence.
   “…half-time” instead of “part-time” employees.
“self perceived” instead of “self-perceived”

10. Discussion: 5th paragraph… 2nd sentence.
“self perceived” instead of “self-perceived”

Answer:
Thank you again for your careful reading and helpful suggestions. We have changed the text accordingly.

11. Discussion: 5th paragraph…5th sentence
Authors need to support the text with applicable references.
“… eating behavior (?);
… overweight and obesity (?);
…time of absence(?).

Answer:

Discussion:
12. At the end of the discussion paragraph the authors should state the “Limitations” of this study, which they referred to in paragraph 4, namely:
The one year difference in data
Height and weight as self reported variables.

Answer:
Thank you for this remark. We amended the above-mentioned limitations in the text (please see page 13).

Conclusions: First sentence
13. Linguistically not sound to start with “although”.
Authors refer to the “association between job insecurity and overweight … as moderate”… but their data suggested a “high” impact. It seems that in the first case they referred to “other” data – while in the “high impact” they referred to their own data. This sentence should be rephrased to read more clearly.

Answer:
We agree with this notion. The sentence has been rephrased we have tried to explain this point more accurately in the conclusion section (please see page 15).

14. Conclusions: Last sentence
This sentence is unclear to which they wanted to communicate to the reader. It should be rephrased.

15. Table 1: Nationality
“non German” instead of “non-German”

16. Table 1: Education level
“without a degree” see my comments earlier.

Answer:
Thank you. We have adopted your proposals.

17. Table 2
The % of overweight individuals are correct while by calculating the % of the obese individuals – non are found to be correct, e.g. full-time 13.5% when in Table 2 it was given as 22.5%
Table should be recalculated to clarify.

Answer:
Thank you for your thorough review. We completely agree with this comment and have to apologise for the mistake and have corrected this in the amended version of the paper.

18. Table 3
The correct way to report OR 95 % CI is 1.08 [0.97, 1.19]
Thank you for this correction which we have included in the text.

19. Table 3:
The last group specified is “unemployed in 2005”. How can the unemployed individual perceived job insecurity? He has no job? This needs clarification.
Answer:
Thank you for this remark. The above-mentioned category has been removed from the table in order to avoid irritations.

20. Table 4:
In the title of this table it is stated that the analysis stratified for age and sex. However in the foot note of the table it is stated that in the analysis of this table the authors “adjusted” for sex and age. This contradiction should be clarified.
Answer:
Thank you. We clarified this point accordingly (please see foot note of table 4).

21. Tables 3 & 4:
Clarity is needed on how job insecurity is calculated. The description in the methods paragraph is not very clear.
Answer:
We agree with this notion and have modified the text accordingly (please see page 8)

Quality of written English
Needs some language corrections before being published. See comments under “discretionary revisions”
Answer:
A native English speaker again checked the manuscript.