Reviewer’s report

Title: Physical activity patterns in older men and women in Germany: a cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 24 June 2011

Reviewer: Alain P Gauthier

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
- None

Minor Essential Revisions
- I am requesting only minor revisions to the ‘Discussion’.

Discussion

Physical activity patterns

1. However, breaking down our own results from time/week to time/day reveals much lower activity in the getABI cohort

   - Change to: However, when our result are considered from time/week to time/day, much lower levels of physical activity are found in the getABI cohort in both activity domains and sexes

2. Change was to were: both light and heavy housework were assessed

3. Discussing our own results against the backdrop of only this one study demonstrates well-known methodological problems in epidemiological research. The use of different questionnaires to assess physical activity leads to hampered comparability of study results

   - Change to: Comparing our results to others in this field of research reveals several methodological issues that merit consideration. Specifically, the use of differing questionnaires can be problematic.

4. Detailed comparisons of physical activity prevalence rates are also hindered for another crucial reason. A common approach in physical activity research is to take current physical activity guidelines as a benchmark for categorizing study populations as active or inactive.

   - Change to: In addition, ever changing physical activity guidelines can at times affect comparability across studies when they are used as a method of categorization.

5. From a methodological point of view, it is not reasonable to compare our (delete own) results with studies using older scoring protocols.
6. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [40] analyzed the data.

- Change to: Researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [40] analyzed data…

7. However, we can at least compare our own data to the existing German studies concerning prevalence of physical activity in old age. This is unclear; it is not the data that is of concern it is the method of categorizing ‘active’. Please clarify or remove this statement.

8. The German National Health Interview 2003 [7] revealed… again, this is anthropomorphism. You are giving human traits to objects. Using the German National Health Interview 2003, researchers found…

9. …attributable to question mode…change to may be attributed to the way questions were posed.

10. While the getABI study asked for activities…In the getABI study, respondents were asked for activities…

11. Our own results fit into an overall epidemiological picture of physical activity in old age…the findings from the current study fit into an overall epidemiological picture of physical activity in old age

Correlates of sporting and domestic activity
Socio-demographic factors

12. We speculate that better education may result in higher income, and thus the possibility to pay others to do household chores, or the gardening is plausible.

13. However, the reasons for our findings remain unclear. Sentence can be removed

14. In contrast to our (remove own) results…

15. Consistent with our own data is the fact…change to Consistent with our analyses is the fact…

Chronic conditions and other physical health-related factors

16. CHF and COPD (e.g. extreme shortness of breath, accelerated fatigue) may cause a reduction of physical activity… CHF and COPD (e.g. extreme shortness of breath, accelerated fatigue) may cause a reduction in physical activity…

Conclusion

17. add commas before and after…,and correlates of sporting,…

18. arouse older women’s…change arouse with increase

The authors are to be commended on the review of their original manuscript.
Thank you for the opportunity to review your work.

Alain Gauthier

Discretionary Revisions

- None

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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