Reviewer's report

**Title:** Prevalence and correlates of stunting and thinness among Pakistani primary school children

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 24 August 2011

**Reviewer:** Pedro Moreira

**Reviewer's report:**

The authors gathered important data about stunting and thinness in a large sample of Pakistani primary school children. I have some questions and some suggestions.

**Methods**

- How many schools refused to participate?
- How many trained senior medical students collected the data?
- For how many weeks were the anthropometric measurements collected?
- Were any measurements collected during the first two weeks of a new school term or immediately after a major holiday?
- Were the instruments checked and calibrated on a daily basis?
- Why authors measured weight to the nearest 0.5 kg instead of using scales calibrated to 0.1 kg?
- Authors stated that “in the sample, demographic information of all officially enrolled students was obtained before data collection”; did authors ask informed consent to the families/parents of the children enrolled in the study?
- Since the sample included children with 5 years of age, were these children skilled to give answers to the structured questionnaire?
- How was define smoking?
- Could authors define the criteria for low, middle and high income?

**Results**

- P values for Crude OR in Table 6 are missing.
- Please provide titles for Figures 1 to 6.

**Discussion**

- Please clarify the reasons, or add references, to say that there was a “significant improvement in nutritional status in the present study (line 4, p.11, discussion)

  Authors recommended WHO reference instead of IOTF cutoffs based on difference estimates for assessment of thinness (lines 8-9, p.11, discussion), but the choice of the anthropometric standards for comparison with Pakistani school-aged children should address other issues (eg, whether references are
appropriate to classify in developing countries, where children’s BMI distributions may be much lower and children may mature later, etc.). Please revise also according the suggested changes in the methods section.

Conclusions
I would suggest a more brief summary of conclusions in this section, avoiding discussion sentences such as “...Integrated nutrition programs in developing countries have had a substantial impact through a combination of targeted interventions involving fields of health“ (lines 7-8, conclusion section, p.13)

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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'