Reviewer's report

Title: Physical Environmental Factors Related to Walking and Cycling in Older Adults: the Belgian Aging Studies

Version: 2 Date: 4 October 2011

Reviewer: Chris Rissel

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Discretionary revisions
This paper represents an original contribution to the literature, as little research has yet examined issues of the environment and physical activity among older adults. With quite high levels of walking and cycling in this age group, and a large sample, it is a good data-set.

Minor essestion revisions
Was physical activity level assessed? If so, it would be interested to know if those walking or cycling for transport, or recreation, were meeting the physical activity guidelines, or what proportion of their overall physical activity came from walking or cycling.
It’s a pity the walking or cycling for recreation was asked in the single question.
There does not appear to be a question about presence of cycling facilities?
Overall there are only quite a small number of questions about the environment asked – and this limits the interpretation of the data and should be acknowledged.

Major compulsory revisions
Methods
It should be explained why adults from semi-urban areas were excluded. Simply to make two very different groups over-simplifies the situation, with many respondents living in semi-urban areas. Also, why exclude those 60-65 years? These exclusions effectively halve the sample, which is a significant.
The introduction appeared to ‘mix-up’ the material on walking and cycling, and I wondered if it might be easier for the reader for the walking material to be grouped together, and the cycling material grouped together? I understand that some of the issues are the same, but there are also differences, and some readers will want to focus on one or the other.
Check for English grammar – (eg not exactly sure what “through peer research” means-in methods)
The results section should state more of the main findings in the text – eg that a third of this age group walking daily for transport and one in five cycled is high be international standards.
In the discussion, the authors need to acknowledge that the relatively high levels of daily walking and cycling means that the sample may be quite different from samples of older adults in other countries.

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

**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