Reviewer's report

Title: Health-damaging behaviours on both sides of the Hungarian-Romanian border: a cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 18 August 2011

Reviewer: Rik Crutzen

Reviewer's report:

This study reports the results of a cross-sectional survey on both sides of the Hungarian-Romanian border and aimed to analyse socio-demographic condition, nutritional status and lifestyle.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. It is not clear what this study adds to the current literature. The authors need to make a much stronger case of the added value of this study. The manuscript as it stands replicates known associations only. The relevance of this study could become clearer if the authors stress in the Introduction section (1) why the focus was on Hungaria and Romania (e.g., Are insights lacking from these countries? Are relations expected to be different) and (2) why the border region is of importance (e.g., How distinctive this is from the rest of Hungaria and Romania?; if not – why not; if so – what are differences and why this region)).

2. Why are analyses conducted separately for the Romanian and Hungarian sample? Given the purpose of the study, it would be more logical to include country of origin as a predictor.

3. Please provide more details about the measures (e.g., lifestyle factors); give examples of questions.

4. Were these measures used in previous studies? Were they validated previously?

5. It seems as if single item measures were used primarily. This is a limitation of the study that needs to be addressed in the Discussion section.

6. Please provide directions when presenting results. For example, physical inactivity was associated with a HIGHER BMI.

7. Please classify effect sizes instead of only stating that associations are significant. How strong/weak were these associations?

8. A Limitations section is missing in the Discussion section.

9. Please elaborate on the fact that this is a cross-sectional study, which only gives insight into associations.

Minor Essential Revisions

10. Page 4: “Belgic” should be “Belgian”.

11. Page 5: “the differences became even larger”; it is not clear what differences
are meant.
12. It is uncommon to have “new” information in the Conclusions section.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests