Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of physical, sexual and mental abuse among overweight adolescents.

Version: 3 Date: 29 April 2012

Reviewer: Alessandra Alciati

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This study was conducted to investigate the prevalence of physical, sexual and mental abuse among adolescent and to examine the associations of all subtypes of abuse with overweight among these adolescents. Since it is important to clarify the role of early environmental stressors on the development of obesity, the paper may add further information to understand the relationship.

There are no Major criticism.

The authors may wish to address the following Minor Essential Revisions:

1. The title should be changed because it does not convey the findings on the association between abuse subtypes and overweight reported in the results section of the study.

2. In the background section the part on different mechanisms that are hypothesized to explain the association between abuse and overweight should be made more understandable.

3. Additional hypothesis on neurobiological mechanisms should be added. Several studies suggest that childhood sexual and physical abuse lead to a long-lasting activation of the hypothalamic pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis, resulting in a higher cortisol concentration, which, in turn, is associated with obesity.

4. The role of disordered eating behavior has been addressed in the Discussion section. Adolescence represents a period of risk for the development of eating disorders and several studies with both community-based and clinical adolescent populations suggest that eating disorders are associated with abuse. The role of abuse related eating disorders in the development of weight problems should be considered in the background section.

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: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the
statistics.

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