Reviewer's report

Title: What practices do parents perceive as effective or ineffective in promoting a healthy diet, physical activity, and less sitting in children: parent focus groups

Version: 2 Date: 6 September 2013

Reviewer: Simon Sebire

Reviewer's report:

The authors have done well in addressing the reviewer's comments and revising their paper in a thorough and well considered manner.

Discretionary revisions

1) I find the new presentation of results (i.e., all quotes in tables) somewhat difficult to read. While this technique is necessary where journal word limits are very tight, I wonder in this case whether this change has really helped the paper. Separating the quotes from the description/interpretation seems to hinder the more interpretative work that the authors now include. My preference is to see some description, supporting evidence, interpretation and identification of nuances and then further evidence if necessary. Having to switch between the table and the text is a little distracting.

2) Line 386. The authors refer to how rewards are consistent with SCT but do not discuss the SDT view on how rewards may control behaviour and undermine persistence. Clearly in this work, as in ours, it is found that rewards are pervasive and liked by parents, the challenge is how this much used strategy can be embraced or manipulated so parents feel that they have it as a tool, but it might not control behaviour with negative results. For example minimising the predictability or rewards and not using promised rewards but only presenting them after a behaviour may be possible. This is a strategy we used in the Teamplay intervention. You may also find our qualitative research with children about their views on parent rewards and reducing screen viewing and how this lines up with SDT (Prev Med, 53, 2011, Sebire, Jago et al).

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

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