Reviewer's report

Title: Sharing good NEWS across the world: developing comparable scores across 12 countries for the Neighborhood Environment Walkability Scale (NEWS)

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Reviewer: Daniel Arvidsson

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors!

This is a well-written paper describing a high-quality study contributing to the development of the research field built environment and physical activity and to the performance of inter-country comparisons and pooled analyses based on NEWS/NEWS-A data. It provides support to individual researcher/research groups how to use NEWS/NEWS-A, to perform the scoring and to use statistical approaches to determine useful items/country-specific modifications of items. Specifically, tables 2, 4-6 provide good practical guidance. Hence, below I only provide suggestions for discretionary revisions.

Discretionary Revisions

Introduction, page 6, Paragraph 2 concerning CFA:

As confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is central in this paper providing the method and the evidence to determinate the use of NEWS and its subscales with items, and that this paper may work as a guiding document to researchers with varying backgrounds and skills (as this research field concerns a broad spectrum of professionals), I would suggest to provide a more illustrative description of CFA (including an example based on NEWS subscales and their items describing how the latent factor is assessed and the meaning of high versus low factor loading etc). It is true that each reader may access this knowledge by other sources (from suggested references in this paper). Although I believe that this additional information may further facilitate the use of this paper as a guiding document in this field.

Conclusions:

I found the conclusion part a little bit too long. I would suggest excluding the first three sentences that repeat what have already been told several times previously and focus more on the conclusions corresponding to the aims of this study by starting the first sentence in the conclusions with:

“To improve inter-country comparability in investigations of associations of perceived neighborhood environment with physical activity and health outcomes and to conduct pooled analyses, the IPEN Adult project propose modifications to the original scoring protocol of the NEWS/NEWS-A and have established
country-specific, comparable measurement models to be employed in future analyses.”

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest 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.