Reviewer's report

Title: What do adolescents want in order to become more active?

Version: 1 Date: 23 April 2013

Reviewer: Katrien De Cocker

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting paper that examines the preference for activity type, co-participants, timing and location of physical activity promotion in adolescents and possible differences by population subgroup. The paper is well-written, with clear methodology. However, I have some remarks and comments for the authors:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Background: last paragraph: Why did you choose these subgroups and did not include school level or age, for example? Did you have any hypotheses?

2. Outcome variable:
   - “which of these activities or sports would you like to try or do more often?”
   I believe there is a difference between “trying” and “doing more often”. You cannot speak of “trying” if you already do this activity… Please reflect on this.
   In addition, was a specific timeframe used, for example next month, year, ever,…?
   - List of six broad activity groups: on what was this selection based?
   - List of six broad activity groups: in the abstract you mention 5 activity types (methods)
   - How many answers were possible: one of the six groups or more? This is not clear at this stage.
   - A continuous variable as a sum of all activity types: please provide more information to the readers on how this was done.
   - Preference for when, where and with whom: was this for ANY activity or for the selected activities reported in the first question? The timing, location and co-participation may vary according to the activity. Did you considered this?
   - With whom: why did you not include class members for example?

3. Self-reported physical activity: was it possible to choose several activities or was the selection limited to 1, 2, …more?

4. Results: is your sample representative for other adolescents? In addition, Strengths and limitations: is your sample representative of the UK or not?

5. Discussion: last sentence, first paragraph: “… introduce adolescents to new activities.” Do your results support this? I don’t believe you can call this ‘new’ activities, given the results in the right column of table 2 (3) (multi-level
regression). Please make clear…

Minor Essential Revisions

6. Background: you state that “Qualitative research has considered adolescent opinion in the design of specific PA promotion programmes but this research has been in small and largely homogenous samples [14,16-18].” What were the results of these studies? Please elaborate on this.

7. Background: last sentence first page: please make clear what you mean by “different subgroups”.

8. Participant recruitment: first sentence: please provide the year in which baseline data were collected.

9. Objective physical activity measurement: swimming was not measured. Did you take this into account somehow afterwards?

10. Statistics: what was the reason for comparing characteristics by sex?

11. Results: you did not report the results for “none” (significant for sex and SES) that were demonstrated in table 2.

Discretionary Revisions

12. Tables: the numbering is incorrect

13. Table 2 descriptive data: add ‘co-participation’ to ‘with’, ‘timing’ to ‘when’ and ‘location’ to ‘where’. Idem for the last table.

14. Last table: remove the white space between ‘at a local community centre’ and ‘at a local park’.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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