Reviewer's report

Title: Active and sedentary behaviours in children aged 7 to 10 years old: the urban and rural contexts, Brazil

Version: 2 Date: 8 June 2014

Reviewer: Carla Moreira

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting paper that addresses an important topic in the context of increasing child obesity, i.e. describe and analyse active and sedentary behaviours of children aged 7 - 10 years old from different areas of residence – urban and rural – of a state in south-eastern Brazil.

However, I suggest considering the following major points to improve the soundness of the study:

Minor Essential Revisions

Use always the abbreviation of a given term that you have chosen: for example, the authors have defined PA as an abbreviation for “physical activity” – but PA is not always used – please check it throughout the manuscript.

Line 245 – delete the words “among children” after “overweight children…”

Abstract

I suggest moving the manuscript aim from method section to the background section.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Introduction

The introduction must be rewritten for a more logical structure and an easier understanding. A rationale is required for focusing on the behavioural correlates (i.e., mode and time of commuting to school, supervised practice of physical activities, time and daily use of the computer, video games and television) of physical activity and sedentary behaviour. It is of great importance to identify factors that could possibly limit a physically active lifestyle and also its implications on health.

Methods

The standard protocols applied to the measures of nutritional status and socioeconomic class need to be described and supported by a reference.

Please provide more information about the questionnaire used to assess physical activity and sedentary behaviours.

Line 78 – The authors state: “….420 children were excluded because their
parents or caregivers had not fully responded to the questionnaire for assessing physical activity, …… or because they had an average time of total physical activity greater than or equal to 3 standard deviations from the mean”

Why children were also not excluded because their parents or caregivers had not fully responded to the questionnaire for assessing sedentary behavior? Please clarify.

Line 88 - Could the authors provide a reference that supports this assertion? (cut off point of 4 hours for daily screen time).

Result

Would be appreciated more information about how the authors determined total Time of Physical Activity.

Discussion

Would be appreciated more clarifications about gender differences regarding the following variables: commuting time to school (round-trip), use of video games and participation in supervised physical activities.

Line 244 – “These results ... time engaged in physical activities”.

As mention in methods section, “Parents or caregivers answered a full questionnaire about socioeconomic status, health, eating habits and physical activity of the children”.

I think the authors could discuss also the importance of the eating habits to explain the children’s overweight from urban areas.

A paragraph about the limitations and strengths of the study is lacking.

A final paragraph about future research directions is also lacking.

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.