Reviewer’s report

Title: Patterns of clustering of six health-comprising behaviours in Saudi adolescents.

Version: 3  Date: 21 July 2014

Reviewer: Richard Tahtinen

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) The authors mention that previous studies have differed in the number and types of health-related behaviours and that these studies have not included a wide range of behaviours. However, the presented shortcomings of previous studies could be similarly applicable to the study at hand; this study also differ from the reviewed previous studies in type of behaviours, except for physical activity and smoking, in number of behaviours, and it does not include a significantly wider range of behaviours than previous studies (the reviewed studies ranged from 2-5 behaviours, whereas the current study included 6 behaviours). Hence, here it would be important to present a stronger argument; how does the current study contribute to or strengthen the current literature?

2) On what theoretical grounds were the studied behaviours included in the current study? What was the goal of the cluster analysis?

3) Overall the introduction should be strengthened in terms of theoretical background, and more elaborately stating the gaps in literature, which the current study aims to fill.

4) The following article may also be of interest to the authors and possibly be useful in extending their background literature:


5) A short presentation of the stability analysis of HACA would be optimal

6) Why did the authors not perform a further validation of the clusters, that is, for example compare the clusters on external variable(s) that were not included in the clustering procedure?

7) In line with results presented by the authors in Van Nieuwenhuijzen et al. [4] study, why was clustering analysis not performed separately for the two different age groups in the sample (13-14 and 17-19 years old)?

8) What percentage of the sample was included in each cluster?

9) Was there some particular reason why the clusters were not analysed based on demographic characteristics, parent’s occupation, and/or the school
environment?

Minor Essential Revisions

10) Please amend first sentence in abstract; “Clustering of multiple health-compromising is usually associated with increased risk of cardiovascular diseases and cancers.”

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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