Reviewer’s report

Title: The Association between Breastfeeding and Childhood Obesity: A Meta-analysis

Version: 2 Date: 25 September 2014

Reviewer: Patricia Tucker

Reviewer’s report:

Discretionary Revisions

1. Abstract, line 55, more information regarding the sample of articles would be helpful (what was the range of publication dates, number of countries represented, etc.)
2. Would have been interesting to test the association at different ages, rather than controlling for age as confounding variable. It is not clear to me if age was accounted for. Also, birth weight.
3. Could add a footnote letting readers know that your search strategy is available should they contact you.
4. You mentioned that you were only able to capture 1 study that was published in a language other than English, however, you have a number of countries represented where the primary language wouldn’t be English (Germany, Brazil, Japan, etc.)

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Title: I would suggest capitalizing “Analysis”
2. Abstract, line 62, remove “for”
4. Page 4, line 108, insert “and” before “2)”
5. Page 4, line 109, insert “of” between “search” and “key”
6. Page 5, line 121, insert “and” between “type;” and “included”
7. Page 5, line 122, remove “at least”
8. Page 5, line 128, replace “or were not the type: reviews, commentaries, …” with “were not primary research (e.g., reviews, commentaries, …)”.
9. Page 5, line 130, replace “would be” with “were”
10. Page 5, line 131, what did you do if a discrepancy occurred regarding article selection?
11. Page 6, line 135, replace “literature” with “article”
12. Page 6, line 136, please provide examples for feeding patterns
13. Page 6, line 138, please provide examples for confounding factors
Major Compulsory Revisions

1. While this is an interesting article which I believe would be an important contribution to the literature, the quality of writing is unacceptable in some instances. I think the writing could be improved, which would make the readability of the document easier (for example, the first sentence in the methods section of the abstract).

2. Background, page 3, first paragraph – the focus on adult obesity isn’t really necessary in my opinion, given the focus of this paper is on the child’s health, not the nursing mothers. I would suggest removing.

3. Background, page 3, line 78, I think acknowledging psychological problems associated with obesity is necessary. Currently you state that mental health problems are possible, but only list sleep trouble as a non-physical example.

4. Page 3, line 82, what do you mean by personal behaviors? Please provide an example.

5. The introduction is quite brief, I think the addition of literature regarding
influencing factors on women’s decision to breastfeed, along with current rates of breastfeeding are necessary. Also, might be helpful to discuss the different forms of infant feeding (exclusive breastfeeding, exclusive formula, combined, etc.).

6. Page 4, line 99-103, I think the need for this work could be more strongly articulated. The fact that it hasn’t been done since 2005 to me isn’t really a good argument. But, perhaps, because breastfeeding rates have changed since then, or more social awareness has transpired, resulting in changing norms re: breastfeeding.

7. Would be helpful to know which journals were manually searched for appropriate studies to include (page 4, line 109)

8. Page 5, line 114-115, “all retrieved articles were hand-searched by 2 different authors” – what does this mean? Do you mean the articles were screened by 2 authors? If so, what screening process did you undertake?

9. Page 5, line 121, you haven’t defined breastfeeding type, so this isn’t clear.

10. Page 5, line 122-124, it is not clear to me which four major confounders were accounted for, or why they needed to account for four? Additional information would be helpful. I also noticed that this list did not include child’s age – was this not accounted for?

11. I found it interesting that the authors used funnel plots to assess publication bias, rather than the Fail Safe N. My experience in meta-analyses is that the Fail Safe N is used to explore publication bias. Insight into why this was not used might be helpful.

12. Page 8, would be helpful if you start your results section with some summary data on the included studies – publication date range, countries accounted for, study design, etc. While the information is available in the table, it puts the onus on the reader to have to count this information.

13. The authors provide a summary of the different definitions used by the authors of the primary studies for obesity, they don’t, however, provide this information for infant feeding. I would suggest adding.

14. Page 11, line 257-264, this is the first time benefits of breastfeeding are discussed. I think this would be more useful to be first introduced in the background section.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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