Reviewer's report

Title: Stress-related eating, obesity and associated behavioural traits in adolescents: a prospective population-based cohort study

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Reviewer: Wendy H Oddy

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Stress related eating, obesity and associated behavioural traits in adolescents: a prospective population-based cohort study

The aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence of stress-related eating and its association with overweight, obesity, abdominal obesity, dietary and other health behaviours at the age of 16. A further aim of this study was to examine whether stress-related eating is predicted by early life factors including birth size and maternal gestational health. The study population was 3598 girls and 3347 boys taking part in the 1986 Northern Finland Birth Cohort. Followed up from before birth, adolescents underwent a clinical examination and all behaviours were assessed by postal questionnaire. Latent class analysis and logistic regression were used to profile adolescent’s risk of obesity with behavioural traits.

Major Compulsory Revisions
The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached.

There are no page numbers given with this manuscript. This makes it very difficult to review. Hence no page numbers can be given linked to comments below.

Data collection and study variables section.
Please define what age these BMI cut-off points were for (16 years).
Define NFBC.
Under Indicators of early life stress section, please reference the definition of gestational weight gain used in this manuscript.
Under food and beverage consumption section, the authors mention that alcoholic beverages were included, but were sausages included?
The cigarettes question would be difficult to delineate what was cigarette and what was snuff.

Results
Please provide some idea of numbers included in the survey.
Can non-stress eating be defined? In Table 3, was the stress related eating referring to the adolescents or their mothers, 16 years earlier?

Was maternal stress during pregnancy accounted for?

Use of the word ‘might’ would benefit by being replaced by the word ‘may’.

Layout of Tables could be improved.

Table 1 – provide p-values to show differences.

Table 2 – was there a gender interaction effect? If not, why were boys and girls studied separately?

Table 3 – Were these associations in the mothers of study participants?

Table 5: Include ‘bivariate’ in the title of the table.

Can the tables be justified as there are 8 tables which are too many? Some of the tables could be supplementary.

Table 7 – it is not clear what Table 7 shows.

Table 8 – there is little difference between boys and girls. Why are they considered separately?

The figures are very complex and not easy to understand.

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: 

No competing interests are declared.