Reviewer’s report

Title: Parental Encouragement of Healthy Behaviors: Adolescent Weight Status and Health-Related Quality of Life

Version: 2 Date: 5 March 2014

Reviewer: Jennifer Savage

Reviewer’s report:

Overall this is interesting research that adds to the parental encouragement literature; specifically that parental encouragement might not have the same influence on normal weight and overweight/obese children and adolescents. While the data is cross-sectional, the sample size is large, which is a positive. However, the paper would be strengthened by clarification on a number of issues and several word and grammatical changes.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
None.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Title and abstract
Overall the title and abstract are clear. The only suggestion is that the word “improvements” is removed from the conclusion section as findings from a cross-sectional study cannot support this.

Introduction
Overall the introduction is relatively clear and straightforward. I have a few suggestions to make it clearer to a reader:

1. While it was clear from the title that this article had something to do with parental encouragement, this was not brought up until the end of the introduction, which made it hard to follow. I would suggest adding something briefly to the end of the first paragraph.

2. Third paragraph, lines 3-4, “A study… has suggested…” A study cannot suggest. Please rephrase.

3. Fifth paragraph, starting on line 5: “A number of studies found that social support was associated with reductions in the HRQoL of adolescents with obesity.” Do you mean “a lack of social support is associated with reductions…”? If not, this is confusing.

Methods
The layout of the section was clear, but the content needs to be clarified in order to better understand the steps that were taken.

1. It was confusing at first why there was a section in the measures for the
ABAKQ. Please make it clearer why you were using data from this section (i.e. which variables were of interest for the current study, and why they were used – as covariates).

2. The way that you described the WHO standards for children is hard to follow, specifically how normal weight was defined.

Results

Overall the results are relatively clear and were described sufficiently. Figure 1 was a nice addition to help show the results.

1. In table 1, it would be more useful to see the mean/SD of the tertiles of parental encouragement than the % in each group

2. In table 1, for HRQoL (global, psychological, and physical) and parental encouragement, it would be useful to know the mean/SD by weight status, since this was a large part of the study.

Discussion

Overall the discussion is clear and concise. The following recommendations are suggested:

1. In the second paragraph, do you mean perceived physical limitations by the parent or by the child? Is there evidence in the literature to support this?

2. In the third paragraph, it is noted that moderation might not have been supported because there are a number of other factors that influence the relationship. If you say this, you should list these other factors along with evidence to support them.

3. In the limitations section, it is noted that the parental encouragement variable in this study might only be an indicator of parental encouragement. Please expand on what is meant by this.

4. In paragraph 5, it suggested the agreement between adolescents and parents might not be as high as between children and parents. Why?

5. The word “improve” is used throughout paragraph 6. Please change this to another word, as the results from this cross-sectional study cannot indicate whether parental encouragement improves any outcome.

Discretionary Revisions:

Introduction:

1. In the fifth paragraph, when you suggest reasons why clinical samples seeking treatment for weight loss are different. Another potential reason that wasn’t mentioned is that these individuals might be more motivated, which could factor into their HRQoL.

Methods:

1. It would be helpful to list a few samples items from the PedsQL.

2. It would be useful to know the decision process behind the specific covariates used.
3. While the section clearly reports that parental encouragement should be one factor, it would be interesting to know the relationship between maternal and paternal encouragement.

4. The data analysis section was clear. The only suggestion is that you choose to refer to it as either HRQoL or PedsQL to avoid confusion.

Results:
None.

Discussion:
1. The first paragraph does not add much on its own. Suggest combine the first and second paragraphs.

Minor issues not for publication
Background, paragraph 1 line 4: a comma is not needed after “(aged 5-19)”
Discussion, paragraph 3, line 9: it should be improvements “in” not “on”
Discussion, paragraph 4, lines 1-3: a word is missing… should it be “to help ensure THAT future obesity…”?
Discussion, paragraph 7, line 2: the comma after HRQoL is not needed

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests