Reviewer’s report

Title: Overweight and obese adults have low intentions of seeking weight-related care: a cross-sectional survey.

Version: 2 Date: 5 March 2014

Reviewer: Martin S Lipsky

Reviewer’s report:

1. The research question seems important and timely. Obesity is a worldwide epidemic and understanding how individuals view their level of need for weight reduction is important to develop strategies for motivating patients.

2. The data seems sound. I was not sure how the authors picked their 1500 to survey from the 6,000 (line 113) although I assume it was like every fourth member etc. Maybe they could state why. Also, they used an online survey and I also wondered why. Was it less expensive? Are the members of the consumer panel already surveyed on line so they were both familiar with and had computer accessibility? The fact that it was online might perhaps create some bias, e.g. poorer individuals less likely to have computer access?

3. I think the conclusions are for the most part valid and useful. A couple of minor concerns. First, I was confused by the statement on line 373; consequently care providers may offer evidence-based effective lifestyle advice with realistic levels of effort and outcomes. Not sure this is a natural consequence and also exactly what to do based on the findings and exactly what the authors mean by this statement. I think this could be left out of the conclusion both in the discussion and the abstract. Also there was a difference in men and women and perhaps they might add that strategies might be gender dependent.

4. Methods seem fine. (See 3). Minor concerns – It does appear like there are significant differences between those more severely obese e.g. >30 than those 25-30. There are more health related issues in those who are more severely obese then those who are in the overweight category. It might have been revealing to look at how the level of WRHR affected table 1. Statistics seem okay to me but I am not a statistician and would suggest that the analyses used be reviewed by someone with more expertise than I have.

5. Strengths are accessing the Dutch panel which seems to be a good representation of the larger sample. Weakness as noted is how generalizable this is to other populations or countries with much different cultures or levels of obesity. Do wonder at the stratification of <25 or >25 BMI. Since I think that the danger of obesity and how it might be viewed differs greatly as the BMI increases.

6. Writing and organization seems good.
7. There seem to be no ethical or competing interests.

Some other general comments.

I think this is a nice study that adds to the literature about an important health topic. The writing is clear and well organized. In the discussion section I think that the manuscript might be strengthened by including some analysis of how the findings the authors report are similar or different than other studies about self-perception and readiness to change among those overweight. For example, I did a very quick search found an article in Obesity 2012 by Sahasporin and White about self-perception. They also found gender and ethnicity differences in perception of weight. I think looking at some of their findings and incorporating into the discussion might be beneficial. I also wonder why there were differences based SES. Based on what we know it is not surprising but, is it a health literacy issue, is it because higher proportions of individual from lower SES has higher BMIs making it more acceptable to be overweight. Would like to see the authors comment on that and also look at the barriers to see if there were different barriers for this group and for women. Might be helpful in deciding how to approach these groups.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

None