Reviewer's report

Title: Associations between perceived and observational physical environmental factors and the use of walking paths A cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 25 February 2014

Reviewer: Jay Maddock

Reviewer's report:

This paper examines the characteristics of users of walking paths in Shanghai, China. The manuscript addresses an important public health problem and is generally well developed. However, there are some areas of the manuscript that could use additional clarification.

Overall, the writing in the paper is good. However, there are some awkward phrases and incorrect grammatical statements. The paper could use a through proofreading from a native English speaker.

Major Compulsory Revisions


2. Methods: It is unclear how or why the six walking paths were selected.

3. Methods: More specific times for the observations would be helpful. For instance, were morning data collection from 6-8 or 7-11?

4. Methods: Were all paths observed on the same days? Were the 20 days of observation consecutive? What month was the data collected? Seasonality and daylight hours could have large effects on usage.

5. Is there reliability and validity information for the rating scale of environmental features?

6. Mean of the two observers was used to report the data. Was an IRR calculated?

7. It might be good to provide a description (table) of the walking paths in the methods section.

8. More information is also needed for the survey sampling. How were the neighborhoods selected? How were households within the neighborhoods selected? Were individuals randomly selected within homes?

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 I have no competing interests.