Reviewer's report

Title: Parental perceived neighborhood attributes: associations with active transport and physical activity among 10-12 year old children and the mediating role of independent mobility

Version: 1  Date: 4 November 2013

Reviewer: Nazeem Muhajarine

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Drop the reference to, reporting and discussion of pedometer data from this paper. Pedometer data doesn't add anything substantial to the paper.

2. Mediation analysis addressing question 2 need to be represented, clarifying the methods used and perhaps with accompanying path diagrams (box-and-arrow) to clearly indicate the mediation relationships being proposed. Please see point "d" under 5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the methods? and the references to other work given therein.

Minor Essential Revisions

3. It is not clear whether the children who reported their active transport and wore accelerometers and the parents who reported their perceptions of neighbourhood built environment actually lived in the same neighbourhood. This may be an obvious point—but given the different living arrangements of parents/step-parents/children it is important that this point be addressed explicitly.

4. How are the neighbourhoods defined?

5. Accelerometer data need to go through some extensive data reduction, quality-checks, adjusting for wear-time before they are used in statistical analysis. How was a valid day of accelerometer data defined? What count thresholds were used to define MVPA, for instance? The paper in its current form has minimal detail on these issues. The space gained in the paper by dropping reference to pedometer data and results could be used instead to fully describe the use and preparation of accelerometer data for analysis.

Discretionary Revisions

6. Addressing the issue of potential confounding by children's 'baseline' health status, particularly obesity or overweight status. (See comments under 2. Are the data sound and well controlled?)

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.