Reviewer's report

Title: Physical activity, screen viewing and obesity status in a nationally representative sample of Maltese youth

Version: 2 Date: 10 February 2014

Reviewer: Leandro Rezende

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Introduction:

- The research question posed by the authors are relevant. However, much of this question has been answered in a previous work published: Decelis A, Jago R, Fox KR. Objectively assessed physical activity and weight status in Maltese 11-12 year-olds. I understand that there the previous article was limited to 11-12 years old children. In this sense, a better justification is needed for the arguments based on existing data

- I do not understand that the comparation of physical activity and screen-viewing levels between countries is a original contribution of the paper. I would recommend the authors to move to the discussion section (including table 3 as a supplementary file). If the authors trust that it should be kept in as a result, a detailed description of the search strategy and selection of the studies should be described in the methods section.

Methods:

- Eligibility criteria of selection of participants should be described.

- Validity and reliability of questionnaire data should be described (if available). If this data is not available, it should be taken into account in the interpretation and limitations of the study.

Results:

- To present a Table with general sociodemographic characteristics would be useful for international readers.

- Even though 901 children provided consent to participate in this study (80% of response rate), accelerometer and weekend data present 72% and 68% of response rate, respectively. The authors should take it into account in the interpretation of results. It would be useful (if available) to compare any available data (e.g. socioeconomic status or other sociodemographic characteristics) between respondents and non-respondents. Reminding the authors that the threshold for minimally acceptable response in prevalence studies should be set at 70% as long as the report shows that respondents and non-respondents,
and/or the study sample and the target population, have similar importante sociodemographic characteristics."

- The article should include descriptive values (absolute numbers, sd, and prevalences) in the overall sample.

Minor Essential Revisions:

- Screen-viewing or Screen-time? Both terms could be used, but I would recommend to keep screen-time all over the paper.

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, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests