Reviewer's report

**Title:** Trends and prevalence of overweight and obesity in primary school aged children in the Republic of Ireland from 2002-2012: a systematic review

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 31 July 2014

**Reviewer:** Johannes Brug

**Reviewer's report:**

Major compulsory revisions = MCR
Minor essential revision = MER
Discretionary revision = DR

This paper reviews trends in overweight and obesity prevalence in Ireland in primary school-age children. The review is conducted according to established state-of-the-art methodology. The paper is well-written, and present interesting findings, and I have only very few comments for the authors.

Abstract

1. (MER) The conclusion's first sentence is very absolute, and I suggest to re-formulate this sentence recognising the caution interpretation the authors suggest in their second sentence.

Methods

2. (MCR) The authors include a rather broad age range (4-12) in which different sub trends may be observed. In the final paragraph of the Results it seems that some more age-specific analyses were conducted to detect possible age-specific trends (as well as gender-specific), but in the methods it is not described how differences in age (and sex) distribution were taken into account in comparing the different studies to detect and explore trends over time, nor how the statistical analyses took this into account.

Discussion.

(MCR) In recent years reports from different countries across Europe on prevalence of obesity and overweight have been reported based on European Commission funded studies, such as idefics, helena, and energy studies. I think it would be good to place the Irish data in a more international perspective, i.e. to benchmark present prevalence rates with those in other countries in Europe, for example by comparing to data presented in PLoS One. 2012;7(12):e50032 and Pediatr Obes. 2012 Oct;7(5):399-411, and the latter study may also help to put the social-economic differences in overweight/obesity in a more international perspective.

(MER) The authors rightly state that the prevalence is high and needs
intervention. Is there information regarding the intensity of interventions to curb the obesity trends in the 2002-2012 period, and were these efforts intensified from 2008 onwards, which may maybe explain the possible reduction after 2008?

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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’