Reviewer's report

Title: Physical inactivity and socioeconomic status in Italian adolescents

Version: 1 Date: 16 August 2005

Reviewer: Ossi Rahkonen

Reviewer's report:

General
The aim of the paper was to investigate the association between physical activity (PA) (after school) and socioeconomic status. The paper is topical but needs some re-writing and re-thinking.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Abstract, page 5, slightly confusing, 1117 boys and 1288 girls responded (= 2405) but the authors write that 6 more, altogether 2411 responded, perhaps all didn’t tell gender but this point should be more exact. Number of respondents is not a result, perhaps it could be moved to Methods.
2. In the Introduction and Discussion the authors should be more careful when describing and comparing their results with other studies; how these studies have been conducted (design, age span, interview, questionnaire, the measure of physical exercise and SES etc.) and especially context (culture, what country). In the abstract we read that the study confirms the association, in the introduction the authors should tell the readers what previous studies show on SES and physical activity in youth, for example what studies (ref 20-23, 25, 28-30) have found.
3. Because the BMC journal has space the questions on activity, attitudes etc should be at least briefly described.
4. I was confused with the used SES measure. I couldn’t find the ref 18 thus SES measure could be described more careful. In the Nordic countries we wouldn’t include housewives in the non-skilled workers, but perhaps they should be included in some category. Could you confirm me showing the educational level of housewives?
5. In the text the results include too many numbers. This should be re-edited omitting several numbers and when used the decimal is unnecessary. Results (especially concerning figures) could be shortened roughly; the reader can look at the figures if she/he needs more exact prevalence.
6. I missed mother’s educational level in the models (Tables 2 and 3) as told on page 5. Why this variable is not included?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. Page 1; … these data are not…; the paper needs language checking.
2. Multiple logistic regression; when studying the association between e.g. father’s education and physical activity are the other factors in the table adjusted for? Perhaps this could be clarified in the text.
3. Discussion on page 10, what do you mean by ‘cultural status’? This comes suddenly in the discussion, might need an operationalisation if used.
4. Why log regression models were not conducted for hours for PA?
5. Discussion on page 10; I was not confirm how well the used SES measure is comparable with the income measure described. This point needs re-writing.
6. Conclusion; how the authors know that families with higher SES consider PA for example ‘essential for … psychological development’? This kind of statements needs discussion and references.
7. The authors could state more concretely how the school administrators can use the results of this study.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1. page 1; what do you mean by ‘employment exclusively’? This may need clarification.

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.