Reviewer's report

Title: Overweight, physical activity, tobacco and alcohol consumption in a cross-sectional random sample of German adults

Version: 2 Date: 22 June 2006

Reviewer: Anthony Kafatos

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper has improved considerably. Some comments that can be considered minor essential revisions are the following:

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Abstract

In the results and the conclusions there appear percentages of overweight subjects. Do these include obese subjects as well? If so the word obese/obesity should be added (â€œ50.3% of the adults were overweight and obese. â€œ a high prevalence of overweight and obesity.). If not, the percentages for obese subjects/obesity should also be given.

â€œTotal cholesterol was elevated to 62.0% â€œ above what level? The same for triglycerides. They were also elevated to 20.5% but the cut off level to which this comparison is made should be mentioned.

Background

The two paragraphs on Echinococcus (In addition toâ€œ Based on an initiativeâ€œ) are irrelevant to the topic and should be omitted.

Results

Paragraph on BMI
Classed as overweight and obese â€œ When providing proportions of extreme obesity, also include the BMI levels above which this paper considers subjects as extremely obese (BMI > 30, 35, 40?)
Table 2: The numbers of the columns for obesity degree 2 and 3 are very small and they could be added to produce one column.

Physical activity (PA)
The sentence: â€œExhausting physical activity lasting 0-2 per week or moreâ€œ is unclear. 0 hours of PA and 2 hours of PA are completely different levels of PA and should be separated.
Similarly in Table 3: There is a column for â€œNo exerciseâ€œ and a column for â€œ0-2 hours/weekâ€œ. Exercise should be included in the â€œNo exercise columnâ€œ.
The number of columns should also be reduced.

Tobacco consumption
Table 4
The table should include a column for non smokers as well. The columns for 31-40 cig/day and >40 cig/day should be added together.

Alcohol
Table 5
There is a column for 0-20g/day and again those who consume 0g/day should be included in the non drinkers. The number of columns in this table should also be reduced because of the small or 0
percentages. There could be one column for 40-80g/day and another for 81 or more.

Laboratory testing
Total cholesterol and triglycerides were elevated according to standard criteria but which are these criteria? Since there is no table on serum lipoproteins it should be defined in the text what these elevated levels of cholesterol and triglycerides are. There is no common agreement on “standard criteria”.

Discussion
The authors should start with the most important findings. The limitations of the study should appear towards the end of the discussion.

Physical activity (page 23). The group reported 0-10 hours. The authors tend to add together the subjects with no PA (0 hours) with those having PA (10 hours) which is very confusing.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential 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