Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of overweight and obesity on the island of Ireland: Results from the North South Survey of Children's Height, Weight and Body Mass Index, 2002

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Dear Editor,

The following are our responses to the Reviewers' Reports in relation to manuscript MS 1359813774125442, entitled "Prevalence of overweight and obesity on the island of Ireland: Results from the North South Survey of Children's Height, Weight and Body Mass Index, 2002"

Reviewer 1: Jonathon C Wells

Reviewer 1 has three main revisions:

Major Compulsory Revisions-Authors' Responses

1) We agree that the original figures were misleading. These have been amended as suggested. The updated figures have been included in the revised manuscript

2) In relation to the queries re the response rate the following amendment has been made to the discussion of the manuscript:

"The extent to which non response bias has affected these results is unclear. However, one could assume that if subjects were likely to refuse consent for the study on the basis of weight, they would probably be overweight subjects. This would result in an underestimate of overweight and obesity. The fact that this was primarily a dental survey and that assurances of privacy and confidentiality were given in the consent form is likely to have minimised non response due to embarrassment as a result of overweight. The same challenges are faced by other similar studies and these challenges are difficult to overcome."
Minor Essential Revisions-Authors' Responses

1) In the interest of clarity and brevity we restricted the manuscript to discussion of BMI amongst school-going Irish Children. However, for the reviewer's clarification, mean height increased from 109.5 cm and 108.9cm for 4 year old males and females respectively to 173.7cm and 161cm respectively for 16 year old males and females. Mean weight increased from 20.1 kg and 19.7kg for 4 year old males and females to 66.1kg and 58.2 kg for 16 year old males and females. Finally BMI increased from 16.7 and 16.6 for 4 year old males and females to 21.8 and 22.5 for 16 year old male and females.

Reviewer 2: Ewa Malecka-Tendera

Reviewer 2 has 2 main comments

General Comments-Authors' Responses

1) Response rate: This has been dealt with in the discussion of the previous Reviewer's comments.

2) In the concluding paragraph we suggest that the emerging epidemic of obesity in Irish children has significant implications for the likely population burden of Type II Diabetes Mellitus and associated health costs over the coming decades. We believe that these are reasonable inferences consistent with population trends on obesity and Type II Diabetes Mellitus and associated healthcare costs in developed and developing countries worldwide. We have however, made minor edits to shorten the concluding paragraph, which now reads:

"In conclusion, this study provides further compelling evidence on the emergence of the obesity epidemic among children in Ireland. Given the burden of disease linked with obesity, in particular Type II Diabetes Mellitus, these findings have significant implications for population health and health care costs over the coming decades."

We hope these revisions met with the Reviewers' suggestions, and that they will be agreeable to the Reviewers.

Yours Sincerely,

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