Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 23 April 2007

Reviewer: Jonathan C Wells

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a well-written paper on a large and important dataset. I have a few comments regarding issues meriting further discussion and presentation

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

The Figures are misleading, stacking the prevalences of two different populations on one axis, which indicates that around 60% are overweight/obese. It would be better to have 2 columns per age group, one for disadvantaged and one for non-disadvantaged, and just stack overweight and obese in each.

The authors need to discuss the non-responders. What evidence do they have that those taking part were representative of those invited? Isn't it likely that those obese or underweight (and the former may be more common) would have been less likely to take part, as found in the UK recently? Likewise, although unlikely to have affected their main findings, the different years clearly varied in numbers of boys versus girls.

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

In results, it is "relative" weight that increased faster than height, ie BMI increases faster.

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: 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