Reviewer's report

Title: Patterns and correlates of physical activity: a cross-sectional study in urban Chinese women

Version: 1 Date: 17 February 2007

Reviewer: Joellen Wilbur

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a very well written paper and an informative study. Although the authors indicate that obesity rates and activity patterns are changing in Chinese women their findings demonstrates lower levels of obesity (12%) than seen in the US. Further, these lower levels may be associated with the high levels of non-leisure time physical activity found in this population. The study findings clearly reinforce the benefits of life style physical activity including walking and biking for transport. This study will provide excellent comparative data for future studies of physical activity patterns in Asian women who immigrate to the United States as well as first and second generation Chinese women.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Although dietary intake was not emphasized it still would be helpful to know what the outcome measure. No information is provided on scoring
2. The actual measure of physical activity was somewhat difficult to follow particularly for exercise. Clarify how current exercise physical activity is being measured. The exercise measure covers the past 5 years. It appears that a person who was very active 5 years ago (but no longer active) and a person very active currently (but not in the past) would receive similar scores.
3. Two years does not seem an appropriate time frame for test-retest of a physical activity instrument.

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1. Although recruitment was presented in a baseline paper it would help to briefly indicate how the sample was selected, how they were approached and where they were interviewed.
2. Indicate why the ages 40 to 70 were selected. It may be related to menopause associated with middle age. No information is provided on how menopause was measured.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.