Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Sun protection for children with oculocutaneous albinism in South Africa; health policy issues

**Version:** 2 **Date:** 19 February 2008

**Reviewer:** Petra Buettner

**Reviewer’s report:**

This study reports about sun protective behaviour of 90 children with oculocutaneous albinism (OCA) attending a special school for the visually impaired in northern South Africa.

**Major compulsory revision**

**Abstract**

1. Background: Last sentence is a result of the study. The background section should lead the reader to the study and should end with the specific aims of the study.

2. Conclusions only relate vaguely to the results given, but provide further results.

**Methods**

1. Participants: There were 112 students with OCA at the time of the study attending the school, but only 90 students were invited to participate. Why? Were the 22 students excluded for specific reasons, or did they not consent to participate? Please explain.

2. Why did you ask â##who bought the hat?â## and â##who bought the sun screen?â##

**Results**

1. First sentence belongs to Methods.

2. Does the number of hats matter, as humans can only wear one hat at any one time?

3. The end of the first paragraph (sunburned soccer players & school nurse) reads more like a discussion section than a results section.

4. Table 1: I suggest to rather provide the median value for number of hats, than the mean value.

5. Sun avoidance behaviour â## is a paragraph about â##observationalâ## data, with no evidence backing up the claims (e.g. how many hours did the children play in the sun during weekdays and during weekends? Separately for boys and girls?). There is no prevalence of sunburns provided stratified by boys and girls to back up the claim that sun behaviour was different between the sexes.
6. Sunscreen preparations: This paragraph is a mixture of (1) results based on data from the children and (2) results of a literature review on sunscreen formulas used. The latter appeared somewhat haphazardly. The methods section does not provide any details on how the sunscreen formulas in use were investigated. In addition, claims between sunscreen use and sunburn are made based on one or two cases.

7. Uptake of free governmental sunscreen & barriers: There is no mention in the aims nor in the methods section that this was investigated. The methods part should clearly state the kind of information gathered during the interview.

8. Skin monitoring and treatment: Again this paragraph is written about observational/anecdotal data, with no evidence backing it up.

9. I cannot see any value in Table 3. The information provided by Tables 1 & 2 is completely repeated in the results text.

10. Overall, the results section is written in a judgemental style which is clearly inappropriate for scientific publication.

Discussion
The discussion is lengthy and does only in part relate back to the results of the study. The discussion should be rigorously shortened to only focus on the results.

What next?: Reject because scientifically unsound

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.