Reviewer's report

**Title:** Sugar-added beverages consumption among pre-school children of Crete: effects on nutritional status and risk of obesity

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 19 February 2008

**Reviewer:** Phyllis J Stumbo

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Information for the author:

This is an analysis of food records collected during a smoking study (ref 17, page 4, line 20) to determine the influence of sugar-sweetened beverages on obesity. (p 4, line 13 states the students would be participating in a nutrition intervention study, it is confusing as to where the subjects did come from, the smoking study cited or the nutrition study mentioned.)

The paper presents useful information but there are a number of questions the authors need to address:

1. P7 line 5-10 states odds ratio was calculated between high consumers with high BMI versus non-consumers with normal BMI **##** comparison should be between all high consumers and all non-consumers, not just those with BMI in specified categories. Have you described the analysis correctly??

2. At several places you state that comparisons show that those with increased intake have more weight gain. Since you measured at only one time point it would be more accurate to say that those with higher intake have a higher weight. You cannot show an increase in intake unless you measure at some baseline point and then measure again at a later time, same with weight, to show **##gain##** you need two measurements. This appears several times, see page 3, line 12-14, page 7, lines 2 and 7. I have made note of this on the attached paper, but please look for other instances.

3. I am confused by the statement on page 7 stating that your comparison group were overweight or obese and have a WC <90th percentile. It is not clear to me why you limited the group to those with a WC less than the 90th percentile.

4. Style comments: Please define acronyms the first time they are used (p 3 last line, what is HBSC?); page 6, line 12 you spell out International Obesity Task Force, but use the acronym IOTF subsequently without identifying it when first mentioned. Acronyms should not be used if the phrase is not repeated at least twice after the first mention.

5. Check reference list, journal abbreviations should appear in all caps (Jama should be JAMA if this is the Journal of the American Medical Association, and Bmj should be BMJ. Check journal instructions for correct use of journal names.)

6. A number of details are needed in the Tables and Graphs:

   Table 1, please improve title, suggest **##Demographic characteristics, exercise**
expenditure and beverage intake of the study population.â## Footnotes should appear in numerical order from top of table to bottom, do not start with #2 and list #1 near the bottom. On this table there are some inconsistencies, the last row lists Sugar-added beverages (g/day) with â##Consumers (%)â## below, but only one number is given in the corresponding columns, it appears the percent is missing. In the next-to-last entry I suggest you say MVPA (min/week for exercisers) and give the n and (%) for this group as well.

Figure 1 title, please spell out IOTF for readers who do not read the text. The X-axis in this table needs a label such as â##Weight categories (beverage consumption)â## and the Reference Category needs to be explained in the labels. It appears that different reference groups are used for Figures 1 and 2, Fig 1 is compared to those with normal BMI and zero sugar-added beverages and Fig 2 for those with waist circumference below the 90th percentile and zero sugar-added beverages. This could be listed on the label rather than hidden in the title. The sketchy labeling makes this manuscript hard to read.

6. I found a number of places where the English (syntax) should be improved and I have made some suggestions for your consideration on the paper attached.