Reviewer's report

Title: Obesity and Clinical Obesity. Men's understandings of obesity and its relation to the risk of diabetes: a qualitative study

Version: 2 Date: 11 January 2008

Reviewer: Margaret Stone

Reviewer's report:

General comments:
This article deals with an important topic related to the public health issue of obesity. The writing style is generally good and the data appear to have been collected using sound methods. However, the analysis appears to have been forced into the description of narrative analysis. What is presented is mostly a description of the data collected under various thematic headings which were either dictated by the topic guide or emerged from the data. There is little in terms of elements such as events, characters or plot which would normally make narrative analysis the appropriate terminology.

Choices as described in the findings are not really events as suggested in the methods. The authors mainly describe views and perspectives and I would suggest that calling these stories does not really make this narrative analysis. There is some element of change over time in the presentation of findings relating to attitudes to physical activity, but even here the authors mainly describe various barriers. However, in spite of these reservations, the article contains some interesting data, particularly in relation to perceptions about body shape and size.

Major compulsory revisions:
1. I would suggest that the authors may need to reconsider the wording of their description of the analysis and presentation of findings in response to the above comments.
2. The paper seems unnecessarily long and the authors may wish to consider shortening it taking a more focussed approach both in the text and the choice of quotations.

Minor essential revisions:
Discussion - first bullet point - differently to should be differently from

Discretionary revisions:
1. Given the sampling methods for qualitative research, the authors may wish to consider whether it is appropriate to give numbers of interviewees with knee problems in different BMI categories.
2. The authors may wish to acknowledge that central obesity as identified by
waist circumference measurement is recognised to be an important indicator of cardiovascular risk and discuss this in relation to their interviewees’ perceptions relating to body size and shape.

3. Given the relatively narrow age range of those interviewed, the authors may wish to acknowledge the limitations of their observation relating to the 'window of opportunity'.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory 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