Reviewer’s report

Title: Preventing weight gain: the delivery of a randomized controlled intervention in community based women

Version: 1 Date: 29 October 2008

Reviewer: G Eiben

Reviewer’s report:

A very well described report of the recruitment and delivery of phase one in a lifestyle intervention study, which is an important area. Primary schools are novel and promising settings for recruitment. The 4 month follow up had very high participation rates.

Following some major and minor revisions

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors didn’t discuss the large number of invited participants who didn’t respond. Only about 11% responded to the invitation which of course influences the study. The authors could show that the participants were quite representative regarding employment, education, born overseas and household income but probably not regarding motivation. It is obvious that only high motivated mothers responded which could be the reason for the high retention rates at 4 months. This issue must be discussed and should even be part of the conclusion. It is also interesting to know how many schools refused to participate before the authors gathered the necessary 12 schools.

2. The first part of the background is about Australian women in the age group 25-45. The referred literature is only about women aged 18-28 and older than 45. Please add references about the age group up to 45 years.

3. The background part about effective and ineffective interventions should be rewritten. The cited article Hardeman et al stated: Interventions to prevent weight gain exhibited various degrees of effectiveness. There are effective interventions, see e.g.: A systematic review of the evidence regarding efficacy of obesity prevention interventions among adults. V. E. P. P. Lemmens 1,2, A. Oenema 1, K. I. Klepp 3, H. B. Henriksen 3 and J. Brug 1,4 Obes Rev. 2008 Sep;9(5):446-55. Epub 2008 Feb 19.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The information in the last sentence of the second part under the heading “Intervention” is already given in the beginning of that part.
2. In the first sentence of the part “Anthropometric measurements” the information about all the weighing periods is unnecessary that far.

3. The weight was measured with empty bladder and light closing. Please add the information about if the weight is taken in the fasting state.

4. Take away the description of methods you don’t show results on, e.g. hip measurements.

5. Please explain the abbreviation MET when it is used the first time.

6. Statistics: change from 600g to 0.6 kg.

7. Table 1
   If you summarize the percent under household income you don’t get always 100%.

8. There are unfortunate baseline differences (not significant) between the intervention and control groups regarding BMI and bodyweight. It would be interesting to see the p-levels.