Reviewer's report

Title: Over-indebtedness as a marker of socioeconomic status and its association with obesity: a cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 17 March 2009

Reviewer: Yannis Manios

Reviewer's report:

This is a very interesting and up-to-date paper due to the economic crisis that has affected most countries globally.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1) The fact that all participants of the GNT-HIS study were considered to be not over-indebted could indeed affect the outcome of the analyses in this manuscript. However, authors have included this in the limitations section of their study. It would also be good to include in the limitations section the fact that weight and height were self-reported. This might also underestimate the association between obesity and over-indebtedness, since overweight people tend to underestimate or under-report their weight. However, the fact that self-reported data was also available for the CNT-HIS study can minimize the effect of weight under-reporting on this association.

2) It would also be good to add some more references throughout the manuscript on the relationship of socioeconomic status and obesity or lifestyle from other European studies such as [Hulshof et al, EJCN, 2003], [Manios et al, Health Policy, 2005] or [Duvigneaud et al, BMC Public Health, 2007] or how financial incentives and public health policies may affect the adoption of healthy behaviours such as [Horgen and Brownell, Health Psychol, 2002] or [Lobstein, Proc Nut Soc, 2009].

3) Page 10, Paragraph 2: Please rephrase the sentence “First, a reverse causation, i.e. the development … can not be ruled out”, to include the fact that overweight people might have a difficulty finding a job or are usually get lower wages than normal-weight and thus may be more prone to over-indebtedness. It would also be good to insert a reference on this statement such as [Johansson et al, Econ Hum Biol 2009] or [Han, Norton and Stearns, Health Econ 2008].

Minor Essential Revisions
1) Page 2, “Background paragraph”: Please rephrase the last sentence. It does not flow well with the rest of the paragraph.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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