Reviewer’s report

Title: Correlates of quality of life of overweight and obese patients: a pharmacy-based cross-sectional survey

Version: 2 Date: 13 April 2009

Reviewer: Thomas von Lengerke

Reviewer’s report:

I acknowledge that the authors have strived to respond to and consider my comments (plus those of - notably three - other reviewers). Still, for reasons given below, the revision does not convince me, and is still in need of major compulsory and minor essential revisions.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Abstract, Results and Conclusions:
Even though the authors did add some additional analyses in response to my earlier comment 1. (see also below, 2.), the abstract still completely focuses on the variations of OSQOL by age, SES, and gender. As I had noted before, these results do not sufficiently add new insights to the field of inquiry. Plus, even if one posits that they may be somewhat innovative by replicating former findings in (overweight) patients ATTENDING PHARMACIES, the authors would have to make a very much stronger case of why regular pharmacy attendance is an interesting issue for the field. This case would have to be made not only in the Discussion, but also in the Theory-part of the paper, and by giving convincing arguments why regular (overweight) pharmacy attenders are interesting (i.e., apart from the mere fact that they can be studied via pharmacists).

2. Table 4:
The table shows results of analyses the authors have added in response to my earlier comment 1. This acknowledged, however, they fall short of my points as follows:
(a) Even though now, cross-tabulations of the BMI-three-group-variable (28-29.9/30-34.9/>=35) with age, gender, occupational status, current smoking, alcohol consumption, co-morbid diagnoses, previous efforts to change diet and previous efforts to change physical activity are reported as part of the table, the ASSOCIATIONS inherent in these cross tabs of the BMI-variable with these variables are neither explicitly numerically specified (e.g. chi-square or related statistic) nor described nor discussed.
(b) Both the fact that these associations (i.e. those between BMI-group and age, gender, occupational status, etc.) are not sufficiently transparent, and that still no theoretically driven hierarchical regressions are reported to clarify if the contrasts "BMI >=35 vs 28-29.9" and "BMI 30-34.9 vs 28-29.9" are significant without
adjustment and attenuated afterwards, imply that no sufficiently thorough mediational analyses have been added. In other words, readers still are not informed of if and how existing differences in OSQOL across BMI-groups may be explained by sociodemographic/-economic factors, behavioral factors, and (co-)morbidities.

(c) What the table does supply are cross tabs relevant to possible moderation (in contrast to mediation) effects, i.e. if age, gender, occupational status, etc. modify the effects of BMI on OSQOL. Also, I agree with the authors’ statement in their reply to my first review that interpretation of p-values may be deceptive given the loss of statistical power resulting from stratification. Thus, the brevity of the texts describing the table (on p. 9 and p. 13) is even more surprising. That is to say that, if the table is finally included, to me it should be described in more detail under Results and Discussion. This description should include noticeable differences across other variables, e.g. that BMI-differences in vitality do seem to differ across age groups (which is unlikely to be explained by excessively unbalanced counts).

Minor Essential Revisions

3. Title:
By WHO standards (WHO. Obesity: Preventing and managing the global epidemic [WHO Technical Report Series No. 894]. WHO: Geneva, 2000), overweight is defined as BMI >= 25, and consists of the categories preobese (25-29,9), obese class 1 (30-34,9), obese class 2 (35-39,9), and obese class 3 (>= 25). Thus, by these international standards, the title has to read “of overweight patients” or “of preobese and obese patients”!

4. Methods- and possibly Discussion-section:
In their covering letter, the authors have revealed valuable additional information in their responses to my earlier comments 9.-12.. Please re-check and make sure that all of these have been included in the revision of the paper as well.

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.