Reviewer's report

Title: Overweight and obesity in urban Africa: A problem of the rich or the poor?

Version: 1 Date: 5 April 2009

Reviewer: Charles Agyemang

Reviewer's report:

Ziraba et al's study assessed trends in overweight and obesity among urban women; and examined how these trends vary by education and household wealth. Their key finding is that overweight and obesity are on the rise in Africa. This current study finding supports the current meta-analyses on overweight and obesity in West Africa by Abubakari AR Obes Rev. 2008 Jul;9(4):297-311 although it appears that the authors missed this important study.

General comments

Although the study findings are interesting, I have major concerns regarding the way the analyses were carried out. The authors indicated in the method section that they used multinomial regression, but the results in table 3 suggest binominal regression (i.e. overweight or obese versus not overweight/obese; and obese versus overweight/ not overweight/obese). The results should be presented as normal weight versus overweight; and normal weight versus obese).

It is also unclear whether there was an interaction between country and time lap. It will be interesting to know whether the increase in the prevalence overweight and obesity differs by country, and if so, the rate of increase in each country. This is highly relevant given the important differences found between the 7 countries.

Other important issues

- More detailed information on DHS study is needed: what was the main aim of DHS study? what was the response rate? Do the response rates differ between countries?

- More information is also needed on weight and height measurements: e.g., who measured weight and height, how many times were they measured and with which instruments? Were the same instruments and questionnaires used in all the seven countries?

- How was urban and rural were defined?

- How does this current finding compare with the current meta-analyses on overweight and obesity in West Africa by Abubakari AR Obes Rev. 2008 Jul;9(4):297-311?

Minor

- Figures 2 and 3: it is unnecessary to present overweight/obese in addition to
overweight and obesity; the reader can easily add them up.

- Abstract: the conclusion should reflect on the key research objective (i.e., trends vary by education and household wealth).

- Background: page 2, para 3 sentence 2, give reference.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests