Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 6 April 2009

Reviewer: benjamin longo-mbenza

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript "overweight and obesity in urban Africa: A problem of the rich or the poor? has been reviewed by me according to the following points:

1. The philosophy of the study is relevant to the well defined question posed by the authors. Indeed, the main and specific objectives were correctly stated.

2. The study well designed and the methods were appropriate and well described. However, the verb's tense was not appropriate.

3. The data are sound and very important for sub-Saharan Africa during the present sanitary, epidemiologic, nutrition, demographic and economic transitions.

4. Yes, the manuscript does adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

5. The discussion is well organized and started by reminding the purpose of the study. Furthermore, the discussion and the conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data despite a longer part concerning the conclusions.

6. Limitations of the work are clearly stated but need improvements suggested by myself.

7. The authors clearly acknowledge works upon which they are building, both published and unpublished data.

8. Yes, the title including 14 words and structured abstract accurately convey what has found.

9. The writing is acceptable.

Discretionary Revisions

I recommend the authors consider the following limitations:

- physical activity and diet in sub-Saharan Africans could be different from those observed in the developed countries so that physical inactivity should be validated in MET. Physical inactivity is very high among poor Africans (Longo-Mbenza B et al. screen detection and the WHO stepwise approach to the prevalence and risk factors of arterial hypertension in Kinshasa. Eur J Cardiovasc Prev Rehabil 2008; 15:503-508).
-all participants are not black. There are from different ethnic/race, religious, geographic, climatic and cultural backgrounds. Forest and rainy season are characteristic for Ghana, Malawi and a part of Tanzania whereas Sahel, Savannah, Muslim and drought are characteristic for Senegal, Niger, Burkina faso and other parts of Tanzania and Kenya. Bantu black Afrins are different from Nilotic blacks, pygmeees and Indian Kenyans and Tanzanians. Alcohol intake may be dependent on religious faith;

-Sarcopenia among elderly participants should be considered;
-the use of BMI 25-29.9Kg/m2 and BMI higher or equal than 30Kg/m2 in sub-Saharan Africa underestimate the burden of overweight and obesity, respectively whereas specific cut-off points of BMI for sub-Saharan Africans show that obesity epidemic is already present in Africa ( Kasiam Lasi On'kin JB, Longo-Mbenza B et al. Survey of abdominal obesities in an adult urban population of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. Cardiovasc J Afr 2007; 18:300-307.

Minor Essential Revisions

The past but not the present and the future is the appropriate tense for methods in the abstract and in the main text of the manuscript.

Reference 1 of the first sentence(second line, page 1) should be in brackets.

Conclusion should be shorten without references.

Only volumes but not numeros will be reported for the references e.g Reference 3 ....J Public Health Policy 2006, 27: 250-264.

References 9 and 10 must be completed.

Major Compulsory Revisions

There are no major revisions which the authors must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached.