Reviewer’s report

Title: Body Weight Dissatisfaction and Communication with Parents among Adolescents in 24 Countries: International Cross-Sectional Survey

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Reviewer: Susan K Riesch

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RE: Body weight dissatisfaction and communication with parents among adolescents in 24 countries: International cross-sectional survey

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The authors seek to examine the extent to which parent adolescent communication is related to body weight dissatisfaction among boys and girls aged 11 to 15 years in 24 western countries. The manuscript would benefit from research questions that guided the data selected from the HBSC. In fact, their background and literature review could lead logically to hypotheses. The literature review and background is current and cites the major authorities in the field. The logic leading to the selection of variables is well described and articulated. The manuscript could benefit from theory to guide the selection of these variables – a family theory or communication theory would be logical.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
Taking advantage of this large database indeed is appropriate. The web site to the database is provided so that curious readers could access it and find out more and what other data are available. The manuscript could benefit from more description of the population based sample, for example, racial/ethnic background, economic status.

3. Are the data sound?
Given that the data come from a large data base with an international protocol, the data should be considered sound. Further, the authors excluded countries or regions with 20% or more missing values on youth height and weight. The authors should clarify that the data are from 2000/01 survey.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data description?
a. Body weight dissatisfaction. The description could benefit from a report of missingness and whether this was at random or if a pattern could be discerned.
b. Communication with parents. The description of these data could benefit from a report of missingness as described in a. Further, the idea of don’t have or don’t see a parent being classified as difficult is questionable. Though, as the authors suggest, it would be difficult to talk with a parent one does not see or have, the conceptualization of difficult may be different. Difficult most likely is perceived as the parent not being open, difficult to approach with topics, or distant in their
Whereas absent may be due to death, divorce, or abandonment. The authors’ explanation on page 8 “We assumed (reasoned) …” is not clear. It is recommended that instead of saying the percentages were very close to one another that the percentages be reported or that the don’t see/don’t have response be dropped from analyses.

c. BMI. Since this is a survey, only self report of BMI is available.

d. As indicated earlier, the results discussion would benefit from organizing the data around questions or hypotheses.

e. The tables were concise, accurate, and easy to read.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

a. The discussion primarily puts the findings from the current study into the context of findings from other studies. Though accurate, the section could benefit from the authors posing additional questions they may have thought of as a result of their analyses, for example, How do these findings move the field ahead? What is the next step in this body of research?

b. On page 13, the wording “did not feel they could talk with their father” may go beyond the data or potentially may be a mis-interpretation of the data. The question asked was How easy is it to talk with your mother/father about things that bother you? Thus, it would be more correct to state that ½ the girls and 1/3 the boys did not feel it was easy to talk with their father.

c. Similarly, on page 14, the authors speculate that it is possible that girls’ self-perceptions may be affected by their relationship with both parents while boys’ self-perceptions around weight appear to be influenced by their relationship with their father only. Though the data indicate this may be true, a theoretical rationale or mechanism would raise this statement beyond speculation to a testable proposition.

d. On page 15, the authors seem to be equating ease of talking with parent as social support and stating that lack of social support many be strongly linked to body dissatisfaction for boys. Again, ease of talking with parents may be a form of social support, but this idea should be made transparent in the background discussion on pages 6 and 7.

e. Authors may want to consider that their study leads to the recommendation or reiteration that fathers have a very important influence on their family and children.

6. Limitations

a. Overall the limitations are well stated.

b. Data on weight and height were self-reported. According to the authors’ background information on page 5, being thin is desired in Western societies. Thus, dissatisfaction with body weight may be higher than BMI would indicate.

7. Authors’ acknowledgements of published and unpublished work

Adequate.
8. Title and abstract convey what has been found?
a. Overall abstract is adequate.
b. In the conclusions, the idea of communication “plays a role” should be conveyed more succinctly. This is a vague phrase.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
a. Overall, well written.
b. Wales is misspelled on page 11.
c. The explanation of difficult including doesn't see/doesn't have a parent is poorly written and should be expanded.

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

**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.