Reviewer’s report

Title: Are lifestyle-factors in adolescence predictors for adult low back pain? A cross-sectional and prospective study of young twins.

Version: 2 Date: 9 December 2005

Reviewer: Jens Ivar Brox

Reviewer’s report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The manuscript has been revised according to the recommendations given. The authors should be commended for markedly improving this manuscript.

However, in my opinion the manuscript can be further improved.

1. The monozygotic sample is not well described. This is important because the authors may underscore the results from evaluating this sample because they conclude that the results can be explained in terms of lack of power. However, power calculations should be made apriori. Assumptions about lack of power when results are analysed are less valuable. Table 5 and 6 report that 413 and 334 pairs were included. The hypothesis that life style factors are not associated with low back pain could not be rejected. The wide confidence intervals suggest that other factors are associated with the life style factors assessed and may reduce or increase the risk of low back pain. Life style factors may be more important at an older age. Future follow-up studies are recommended for testing of this hypothesis.

2. The size of the cohort studied is described in the abstract, but not in the material (page 6).
2. Highlight the main findings in the results section in the abstract. The twin-control study may be underscored.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No