Title: Oral health and obesity indicators

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Please find attached our revision of the manuscript. Below, we are giving response to the points raised.

Sincerely,

Anna-Lena Östberg

Authors’ response to comments from the editorial office

1. Please move your Methods Section placed after the Conclusions and place it after the Background Section.

Reply: Done. We regret that we might have misunderstood the author’s instructions (accessed 2012-03-11).

2. The Background Section of your Abstract needs some context info.

Reply: Information about the context has been added.

3. Please state in the Methods section whether written informed consent for participation in the study was obtained from participants or, where participants are children, a parent or guardian.

Reply: We have added the requested information to the Methods section.

Authors’ response to comments from the Associate Editor

A minor issue is that the methods sections appears after the conclusion and
needs to reorganised so that the flow of information is correct.

Reply: Done. We regret that we misunderstood the instructions for authors (accessed 2012-03-11).

Major concerns are:

1. The outcome data is now 20 years old, why are these finding still applicable today, why was this not noted as a limitation of the study? Why has it taken so long to carry out this analysis?

Reply: The measures of obesity have in recent years been increasingly discussed. That is why we wanted to explore the existing data for possible associations between dental data and different measures of obesity. The focus for our study is these associations, not prevalence data at the time.

2. This is a longitudinal study, however as identified as a limitation, the analysis is essentially cross-sectional, was it not possible to use longitudinal data in the analysis?

Reply: The data collection of 1992-3 is to be seen as a baseline for further studies (which are planned).

3. In the methods, no detail is provided on the dental component of the study, and significant details are provided on the variables and anthropometric measures. This is a public health journal and the details of the dental component are important.

Reply: More details are added to the Methods section about the dental component of the study.

4. The issue of non-participation is simply referred to a published paper, a summary and its impact on the current analysis would be useful.

Reply: More information has been added to the Methods section on this matter and also a comment in the Discussion, § 2.

5. More than half the references are more than 10 years old, and I appreciate the outcome data is 20 years old, the science and information has progressed in this field significantly over the last 20 years, it would be good to update the references. The first reference for example is 14 years old, the literature and importance of the global obesity epidemic is now a significant public health problem.

Reply: The references have been updated when possible. However, as this is part of a longitudinal study over more than 40 years, the references regarding earlier reports from the study are of corresponding ages. Also, the same applies to original references pertaining used measures.

6. You argue that researchers needs to carefully think about the obesity measure used in the cover letter, however your findings do not overwhelmingly suggest this nor does your discussion explore this in sufficient detail.

Reply: This is now more discussed in the manuscript, please see last paragraph
7. Overall, the manuscript the message in this paper is unclear, and needs a focus on the central aim of the study.

Reply: In studies of oral health, different measures of obesity have seldom been investigated. The message is, based on the results of our study, that in further studies on oral health and obesity, different measures of obesity should be explored. We have now tried to bring this out more clearly in the paper.