Author’s response to reviews

Title: Bariatric Surgery for Obese Children and Adolescents. A Review of the Moral Challenges

Authors:

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Author’s response to reviews:

Bariatric Surgery for Obese Children and Adolescents Response to the reviewers

Dear editor

I thank you for the reviews, which have been addressed in the following manner:

Reviewer #1:
The authors improved in the revised version the overall quality of the manuscript. The presentation and writing have been refined and the introduction clarified. The manuscript has been revised in punctuation, phrasing, and structure. The authors have satisfactorily answered to all issues and I think that in the present form the manuscript is now acceptable for publication.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Reviewer #2:
It is clear the author invested both time and energy into revising the revised manuscript. However, issues remain outstanding that need to be addressed:

1. There still are numerous places throughout the manuscript with incorrect punctuation (mostly missing commas), incorrect verb tenses within sentences, and awkward sentence wording and structure. Although the quality of the writing is slightly improved, overall, it remains poor.

ANSWER: A native English speaker with top grades in English, and who is also an expert in the field, has checked the language of the manuscript and suggested a number of corrections and improvements.

2. The details of the literature search are not provided. For instance, most contemporary reviews (e.g., systematic, integrative, scoping, etc.) include the following details (but are not limited to): Databases searched, search terms applied, time frame of search, inclusion/exclusion criteria, quality assessment
criteria, categorizing/grouping of studies, etc.

**ANSWER:** This has now been added: “MEDLINE, EMBASE, PsycINFO, Web of Science, Eurethics, Bioethics Research Library at Georgetown University, BELIT, and SIBIL was searched for systematic reviews, primary studies, reports and books. Search words were: obesity, obese, overweight, overweight, child*, adolescent*, pediatric*, young*, teen*, youth*, ethnic*, moral*, patient autonomy, consent, assent, conflict, interest, self determination, health disparities, discrimination, mental capacity, mental competency, parental, perceptive discrimination, and beneficence. The search was performed in October 2012. Titles and abstracts were screened for morally relevant issues. Selected references were assessed for content and clarity of presentation. Articles only mentioning that there are moral challenges, but without explaining or analyzing them, were excluded. Relevant references found in the reviewed literature, were added.”

Reviewer (cont.): Also, it is quite unusual that the literature search yielded 227 manuscripts, and that there are exactly the same number of citations included in the reference section.

**ANSWER:** As additional references of particular interest were included in the review, one should expect the number of references to be close to the number of references identified by the literature search. As stated in Figure 1: “64 references included. On basis on unsystematic searches”

3. The last sentence of the abstract may be written to be provocative, but it could be re-written as: “Performing bariatric surgery for children and adolescents with obesity in order to discipline...” to be less dramatic.

**ANSWER:** The sentence(s) now read: “Performing bariatric surgery for children and adolescents with obesity in order to discipline their behavior warrants reflection and caution. Cutting in children’s healthy organs in order to discipline their behavior, to satisfy social ideals for body shape, or to compensate for poor parenting should be avoided. More evidence on outcomes is needed to balance benefits and risks, to provide information for a valid consent or assent, and to advice minors and parents.”

4. The formatting of the references section is inconsistent.

**ANSWER:** The EndNote format has been used for BMC Medical Ethics. However, some errors were found in the input database, and have been corrected.

Author’s general comment: I am most thankful to the reviewers for their critical comments and suggestions, which have improved the manuscript.

Editorial Requests:

1. Please revise your manuscript such that it adheres to the guidelines set out in our Instructions for Authors of Debate articles
AUTHOR’S ANSWER: I have made the manuscript adhere to the Instructions for Debate articles. This structure is not consistent with the comments and suggestions of the reviewers, e.g. comment #2 of reviewer #2, which presupposes a review article (research article). I am happy to revise the manuscript so it adheres to a review, if you prefer.

2. We recommend that you ask a native English speaking colleague to help you copyedit the paper.

AUTHOR’S ANSWER: I have done so. See also comment #1 of reviewer #2.

Best regards
Bjorn Hofmann