Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 13 October 2012

Reviewer: Alessandra Alciati

Reviewer’s report:

The article addresses the ethical aspects of applying bariatric surgery to morbidly obese pediatric patients, using a Socratic method. This topic may be of interest to the number of specialist involved in the decision (surgeon, pediatrician, nutritionist, endocrinologist, psychologist, psychiatrist), even if this argument has already been addressed in the literature.

The paper is globally well structured but the phrasing is sometimes lacking. The manuscript addresses the broad spectrum of moral issues exhaustively and the ethical reasoning is generally logical.

We recommend the following discretionary revisions:

INTRODUCTION

1. The central part of the introduction is confusing because there are too many questions about the different topics. This part is made even more redundant by the fact the discussion of each question was issued with comprehensiveness in the results section.

2. While taking account of the scarcity of current scientific evidence, it may be helpful to the reader a brief overview of the current evidence on the outcomes of surgery in adolescents, especially since the moral underpinnings of the “factual issues“ are discussed in Conceptual Challenges section. A quantitative overview of the effectiveness of bariatric surgery in children and adolescents, the rate of complications and a comparison with other medical non surgery intervention programs need to be provided. For this purpose, it may be useful to describe the results of papers such as the review of Treadwell (2008) already cited in the text but only to remember the risks of surgery.

AUTONOMY AND COMPLIANCE

3. The important topic of compliance to postoperative nutritional and behavioral indications are discussed superficially.

INFORMED CONSENT

4. I appreciated, the mention, in this (and in others) section of the paper, of the comorbidity between obesity and depressive and anxious disorders. The vast majority of recent studies, in adult population, supports this comorbidity making the moral challenge more complex.

Minor essential revisions:
PREJUDICES
5. The statement in the last four line, paragraph 2, page 8 can not be considered as a prejudice

CONCLUSION
6. The section Conclusion both in the abstract and in the article does not reflect the skill with which the topic were discussed in the text

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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