Reviewer’s report

Title: OBAYA: Obesity and cancer in young adults, feasibility of a population-based multiethnic cohort study using electronic medical records

Version: 1 Date: 14 November 2011

Reviewer: Liping Pan

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Major problems:
The association between obesity and cancer among young adults is an interesting area that is currently understudied. The manuscript described some baseline information for the cohort study. However, there were lots of uncertainties of the further follow-up. Based on the data, 31.6% of participants were lost to follow-up during 2007 and 2009. To investigate cancer risk and associated risk factors, the follow-up period may be longer than 5 years even though it is not stated in the manuscript. I am not sure what the retention rates will be after 5 years. It is difficult to draw conclusion from this cohort study if the retention rate is <50% because the participants who were lost to follow-up were not quite comparable to the participants who stayed in the study (table 4).

Minor problems:
1. Line 29, need a reference for the definition of severe obesity besides Flegal’s article (e.g. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Clinical Guidelines).
2. Line 36 & 141, it would be better to replace “body size” with “weight status”.
3. Line 102-103, I don’t quite understand “replacing waist-to-hip ratio by a BMI #35 kg/m2 “. Does it make sense to replace all the ratios with BMI #35 kg/m2?
4. Line 124, based on table 2, the young adult cohort should have lower proportion of minorities.
5. Line 133, based on table 4, those who were lost to follow-up should be more likely to be minorities.
6. Line 173, since the participants who were lost to follow-up were not quite comparable to the participants who stayed in the study, we cannot conclude that “our data do not suggest major bias.
7. Line 190. “Not” was missed after “have”.
8. The demographic information of the young adult cohort presented in table 1 and table 2 were inconsistent.

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 no competing interests.