Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 7 May 2012

Reviewer: Liping Pan

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Major problems:

1. Conducting a cohort study on participants of health plans may not be a good idea with the migrations of the participants over the study period. The retention rate was only 68.4% during 2007 and 2009; the future retention rate is unpredictable. I am not convinced by the author that “the loss of follow-up may drop dramatically” because it will need a long time period of follow-up given that the incidence of the “health outcomes” are low among young adults. Based on table 4, the characteristics of those lost to follow-up were not quite comparable to the adults stayed in the study. The author can always publish the paper if there is reduction in % of loss of follow-up in the future.

2. There were about 20% participants with unknown race/ethnicity. Race/ethnicity is an important covariate to consider when analyzing and interpreting data. The missing data will cause bias in the association between obesity and health outcomes.

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). I made this recommendation in my first review report. The author argued in their response letter that there is no consensus on the definition of severe obesity among children. They want to use 1.2*95th percentile as the definition of severe obesity. However, that definition is for children and adolescents, but not young adults. Please refer to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Clinical Guidelines for the definition for adults.

2. Line 238, need a reference for “6% of young adults are extremely obese”.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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 no competing interests.