Reviewer's report


Version: 4 Date: 19 June 2013

Reviewer: Colin Dr Bell

Reviewer's report:

- Minor Essential Revisions. The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

1. Abstract conclusion: Be specific about the positive health impacts of physical activity

2. Methods paragraph 5: There appears to be an over-adjustment for race in the covariate model which includes both race/ethnic group and racial composition of county. The authors should explain what the county racial composition adds to the model

3. Table 1 and 2 were not supplied with the article

4. Figures 4, 5 and 6 and tables 1 and 2 should refer to as obesity ≥ 30 kg/m² rather than > 30 kg/m². Hopefully this is just an error in the presentation and not in the analysis.

5. Results para 3: Can the authors please quantify the largest decrease in obesity prevalence for men and women and name the relevant county?

6. Conclusions para 1 and 2: These paragraphs appear to lay the responsibility for physical activity and healthy weight on individuals. Particularly the statement “It is possible that for a segment of population, neither the will nor the physical or mental capacity exist to engage in physical activity.” It is highly likely that the physical, financial, social and policy environment in some counties account for the variation observed and therefore society as a whole should share responsibility. Some comment along these lines is warranted.

7. Conclusions: replace meant with mean in the following sentence Second, if caloric intake was substantially over the level required for energy balance, the reported 74 Kcal/day reduction in intake may still meant the US was not in energy balance despite higher levels of physical activity.

8. Conclusions: Final paragraph. Given that the manuscript is primarily about physical activity and obesity it would make sense to focus the conclusions on how best to strengthen physical activity and the relationship of physical activity to obesity

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests