Reviewer's report

Title: Hospital admissions in relation to body mass index in UK women: a prospective cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 24 December 2013

Reviewer: Andrew Renehan

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Overview
The central question here is well captured in the title. This is very large well documented cohort in women. The analyses are robust and well considered/adjusted for potential confounding and measurement error. The authors arrive at a well justified conclusion – the main findings are not a surprise and the estimates are believable and plausible.

Major essential revisions
A few key limitations that are not addressed by the authors – but could be without much extra work.

1. The time period is from 1997 to 2008. This is a limitation as it does reflect current UK practice (which may even be worse). There have been many changes in UK referral practice etc. since 1997, and this needs to be considered. The authors should explore for a period effect.

2. A clear limitation is the inability of the data to distinguish between emergency and elective admission. These are driven by often totally different sets of factors. For example, even in a timescale of 10 to 15 years, improvements in anaesthetics and attitudes to operating on the obese patient has probably impacted upon orthopaedic surgeons’ willingness to operate on obese patients. These trends should be explored.

3. The standard nomenclature used by Diabetes UK is type 2 diabetes rather than type II diabetes (and similarly for type 1 diabetes). Please correct throughout.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests: No conflict of interest to declare