Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Maintenance Interventions for Overweight or Obese Children and Adolescents who participated in a Treatment Program: Study Protocol for a Systematic Review

**Version:** 1
**Date:** 7 August 2014

**Reviewer:** caroline Braet

**Reviewer’s report:**

The authors describe a study protocol for a systematic review of weight maintenance interventions for children and adolescents who participated in weight loss programs. Studies on this topic are still scarce but highly necessary, so reviewing the existing knowledge is of interest. The protocol contains a clear rationale for the study and a detailed description of the methodology. If the study will be conducted following this protocol, I’m confident that it will yield important results. I do have some minor comments the authors might consider:

1. **Background:**
   a. Since efficacy refers to effects under controlled circumstances while effectiveness refers to effects in real life, the authors should be more precise when stating their aims.
   
   b. There is no clear definition of drop-outs and non-responders; so they are used differently in different studies. Authors need to make a good definition of both and they need to assess both in all studies of the review.

2. **Outcome measures**
   a. If pre-weight loss program weight data are available, will these be used, or are the analyses limited to pre- and post- maintenance intervention data?

3. **p.7: risk of bias:** it is more or less clear how the risk of bias will be assessed, but it remains unclear to me how the results of this risk assessment will be taken into account

4. **p. 7, selection bias:**
   a. I’m wondering whether and how the representativeness of cohorts will be considered and evaluated?

5. **p. 7: blinding:**
   a. do the authors mean: ‘when outcome assessors are blinded’ or: ‘when outcome assessors are not blinded’.

   b. How will the impact from concurrent interventions and unintended exposure will be considered and evaluated?

6. **p.8, treatment effect:**
   a. will (change in) % overweight be used as second best outcome variable (it is a
primary outcome at p.5)?
7. p. 10: reporting bias:
   a. will colleagues will be inquired about unpublished studies?
   b. will trial registers be checked to detect studies that did not result in publications?
   c. will conference presentations and posters be included or considered?