Reviewer's report

Title: The influence of the maternal peer group (partner, friends, mothers' group, family) on mothers' attitudes to obesity-related behaviours of their children

Version: 0 Date: 05 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Michael Khoury

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to re-review your revised manuscript assessing the influence of the maternal peer group on mothers' attitudes to obesity-related behaviors in infants. The authors should be commended on the significant efforts undertaken to make the suggested revisions. Namely, the Methods have been clarified, the Results expanded, and the Discussion focused to the findings of the study. Below are further recommendations:

Title "on mothers' attitudes to obesity-related behaviours" - in them, or in infants? Should add "in their children" or something of the sort to the end of the Title

Also, given that much of the discussion is on behaviors in addition to attitudes, maybe this should be included in the title.

Abstract

Methods: the study design and source of the data should be put at the beginning of the methods.

Results: are improved now. Should add numbers to support the statement that "more highly educated mothers rated social connections as more influential than less educated mothers." Especially since this statement is made in the conclusions as well.

Background

Shortened background has been improved.

Methods:

Issues raised by the reviewers have been addressed

Results:
The authors have added statistical analysis rather than merely descriptive data to the revised manuscript.

- "Attitudes toward child feeding were most likely to be influenced by mothers’ group peers, followed by child physical activity." This statement is not supported by a statistical test demonstrating that the difference is not due to chance alone.

- The first two sentences in the second paragraph of the "Moderating Influences" section of the results (starting with "When comparing treatment and control groups…") can be combined to one sentence.

- Page 7 line 5: the p<0.001 for all, not <0.01

- Why was the Peer influences and behavior section not expanded with either more data in the text or a table/figure associated with it. This could even be included as an appendix table. Generally, p values should not be placed if the accompanying data is not included. This is especially important given that much of the discussion is centered around behaviors rather than attitudes.

Table 1

- Child age - needs units - months I presume?
- Mother's age - units
- BMI - needs units
- *why were there 44 pregnant women? Was this not a study of new mothers with the children aged 4 months at baseline? This should be clarified

Table 2

- The no-partner column: Is the influence reported there the influence of not having a partner? I don't quite understand the meaning surrounding this column. I had previously suggested this be removed. This can be left for the editors to decide if necessary.

Table 3

- Much improved, clearly conveys the impact of education.

Discussion
The discussion has been largely improved in its re-formatted state.

Page 13, line 32: "Education is a good measure…” This sentence did not make a lot of sense to me. Are you suggesting that because new mothers may not be actively earning income or working that education would be an appropriate surrogate measure of SES? It may be a stronger point to simply state that education has been shown to be associated with SES in all populations, including new mothers.

Page 13 line 41: "Given the strong link…” I don't think you can say lower SES mothers have weaker social networks from the results of the present study. Rather, they seem to be less influenced by their social networks. Your results suggest that this lower influence may result in a negative impact on behaviors given your data demonstrating longer breastfeeding duration in those that were more greatly influenced.

Conclusion: "Equity should therefore be taken into consideration when contemplating obesity-prevention interventions that target these groups.” I'm not sure if you mean equity in the sense of being fair and impartial or equity meaning the wealth of the family. This should be clarified. Really though, this finding warrants further evaluation. Do mothers with lower education/lower SES want to have a stronger network and just don't have the access or the time?

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:
Acceptable

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