Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of the intervention program “JolinchenKids – Fit and Healthy in Daycare” on energy balance related-behaviors: Results of a cluster controlled trial

Version: 0 Date: 31 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Anna Harton

Reviewer's report:

I congratulate the authors of a very interesting article. The implementation of educational programs in the group of the preschoolers children is a very important element of the prevention of many diet-related diseases. The Authors present a program that is multi-faceted. The content of this work could be successfully divided into at least two separate thematic articles. The first of them concerning a healthy lifestyle, including nutrition and physical activity, and separately mental well-being among preschoolers.

Below I place my comments and suggestions and requests for clarification of selected issues, which will allow for a better understanding of the entire content of the manuscript.

Please explain a few of the following elements about data, methods and participants
1. Please explain if the examined group of nationwide sample of daycare facilities (mentioned page 7, lines 171-172) / children attending those DFs is representative for Germany?
2. The first point of qualification - the size of the group of children in DFs? (mentioned page 7, lines 180-181).
3. The Authors write "Additional information assessed in the short questionnaire included estimates by the heads of DFs regarding the percentages of parents … " data for example on parental income, education, migration and others (mentioned page 7, lines 183-186) - Please explain, on what legal basis daycare facilities can share data about parents with other people (also for research). Does this not require consent of the ethics committee and parents?
4. Page 7-8, lines 186-187 - the Authors write "The recruitment took place in summer …" - Do the daycare facilities operate / work during summer?
5. Page 8, line 191 - the Authors write "… we asked the DFs to choose two kindergarten groups" Whether age groups of children were included?
6. Please explain if „Ethical approval (HR/ RE - 196 522, April 28th, 2016)" applies only to children's measurements or the implementation of the entire program (data collection from DFs, parents data or others program element)?
7. Page 8, line 200 - the Authors write „ … program implementation started at intervention DFs with teachers' training sessions" - What was the teachers' training sessions?

Anthropometry (page 9, lines 220-237)
8. Whether the anthropometric measurements were performed once / repeatedly (if so how many times? Were the results averaged?)
9. Were the anthropometry measurements performed individually / separately?
10. Whether the results were corrected for the weight of the clothes? (if so what was the value?)
11. Were the children fasting before BIA measurements?
12. Have the BIA measurement procedures been followed (if so, according to which recommendations, please refer to the source / reference to the literature)?

Healthy eating
13. Please explain if self-developed food frequency questionnaire (FFQ) has been validated and how?

Statistical analysis
14. The statistics section is quite complicated and difficult to understand for the reader due to the multiplicity of data and their categorization. In my opinion, the description with the division into the type of data (qualitative / quantitative) would be more readable. In the case of quantitative data, information on the distribution of data is also important (were such analyzes performed and what tests were used?) - this part should be supplemented by the Authors. In the further part it is worth to include information which tests were used depending on the type and distribution of data?

Results
No statistics are included in the tables with the results - if it is reasonable, please complete these data in the tables and below them.

Discussion
The discussion is synthetic and has been carefully written. However, in my opinion there was no comparison with the results of others educational program addressed to kindergartens implemented in Europe. An example of a similar program was the program implemented in Poland („Eating Healthy, Growing Healthy”), whose data has been published in 2017-2018 years. The discussion should be supplemented with such a comparison.

The list of abbreviations
There is no the AOK abbreviation. This abbreviation has actually been explained on page 6 (lines 145-146).

References
10 out of 45 items (23%) is old - it is over 10 years old. Some technical shortcomings in the list of references, including once the use of terms and once full names of journals (item 2).

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.

Yes

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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Acceptable

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