Author's response to reviews

Title: Variation in the effects of family background and birth region on adult obesity: results of a prospective cohort study of a Great Depression-era American cohort

Authors:

Hui Zheng (zheng.64@sociology.osu.edu)
Dmitry Tumin (tumin.1@buckeyemail.osu.edu)

Version: 5 Date: 17 May 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
Revision Memo

Variation in the effects of family background and birth region on adult obesity: results of a prospective cohort study of a Great Depression-era American cohort

May 13, 2015

We thank the editor and reviewer for additional comments on our manuscript. In this memo, we describe how we have addressed each comment in the fourth revision of our manuscript.

Response to Editor:

1. Are the data used openly available?

We have clarified that the HRS public data were used for the analysis (p. 7).

Response to Reviewer 1:

1. How were height and weight measured?

We have clarified on pp. 9-10 that height and weight were self-reported.

2. The use of self-reported height and weight measures should be acknowledged in the abstract, main text, and discussion.

This aspect of the study design was stated in the abstract (p. 2) and main text (p. 9), and discussed as a limitation of the findings (p. 17). In the latter section, we clarify that height and weight may be differentially misreported across birth regions, biasing estimates of regional differences in obesity risk.

3. The abstract misstates that analyses were adjusted for health conditions.

We have revised the abstract to clarify that analyses were adjusted for health behaviors (smoking and exercise), not health conditions (p. 2).

4. The title should refer to “self-reported obesity.”

We have elected not to make this change because obesity was calculated from self-reported height and weight, but was not self-reported directly. We believe that the construction of the obesity measure will be clear to readers given the revisions to the abstract described above.