Reviewer’s report

Title: Parent and child perceptions of school-based obesity prevention in England: a qualitative study

Version: 2
Date: 20 August 2015

Reviewer: Ariane Ghekiere

Reviewer’s report:

Please number your comments and divide them into

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Throughout the manuscript, it is not clear what the intention was of the qualitative study. What was the reason to do these focus groups? What elements were hypothesized to be clarified or discussed during these focus groups. More insight in the rationale of the study is needed. For example, reasons why the intervention may have worked/not worked, what was liked/disliked in the intervention etc. are elements which could help in explain the interventions effects, but these are not discussed in the manuscript.

More information should be given about what was indicated among the children and what was indicated among parents. Were all topics discussed among both children and the parents? How were the subcategories made based on analyzing the data both from parents and children separately? Was there a difference in elements indicated by children compared to parents? Was there a difference according to gender, SES?

It is acknowledged that the intervention effect may be stronger among less affluent families. The qualitative design of the study should allow to determine why this would be the case. Previous studies also found different intervention effects according to family SES, most often increasing the good practices among families who were doing already better at baseline. How can this study give insight on why family SES moderates the effectiveness of interventions?

- Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract:

Indicate which program was used for the analyses.

Be more precise in what the aim was of the focus groups, what was aimed to obtain via the focus groups?

Results in the abstract are not completely clear without reading to full manuscript.

Introduction:

Line 43: explain a bit more in detail how the qualitative data can be informative
Line 52: each school day an additional 30 minutes PA?

Line 68: clarify which individuals were seen as the two stakeholder groups

Methods:
Was every individual invited to take part in the qualitative part of the study? Or what determined who was invited to participate in the study?

Results:
The first paragraph in the result section may be better to include in the method section.

The focus groups included parents/children across different schools? Can something be said about the response rate of the participants.

Line 111-113: next to the mean of the attendees per focus group, please provide the range of attendees of the focus groups.

It is noticeable that several quotes were taken from participants in school 5. Can you maybe give some more information about the participants ? Gender, age for example?

Line 157: this is an important finding, this may explain why less affluent parents may have benefit more from the intervention. Were there specific elements in the intervention aiming to target less affluent parents, those at the highest risk of obesity? Were there other elements that were differently perceived based on their SES or gender or other characteristics?

Line 177: it is not clear what this paragraph and the first quote illustrates.

A visual summary of the results would maybe clarify the results. Now, there are quotes and subtitles, but you get lost in the result section.

Discussion:

The authors discuss the potential negative effect of eating disorders and stimulating interventions involving the creation of a positive body image. How do the authors think this would be possible in practice?

The discussion is relatively short, and doesn’t really give a clear message.

Additionally, it is not really clear what the results are of this study. What does this mean practically? This should be better explained what we have learned and via which pathways the intervention may have worked or not. What were the barriers for example why parents or children indicate the intervention did not fully work?

Line 355: in which way do you think this may have affected the results or interpretation?
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests