Author’s response to reviews

Title: Contextual influences on physical activity and eating habits - Options for action on the community level

Authors:

Sven Schneider (sven.schneider@medma.uni-heidelberg.de)
Katharina Diehl (Katharina.Diehl@medma.uni-heidelberg.de)
Tatiana Görig (tatiana.goerig@medma.uni-heidelberg.de)
Laura Schilling (laura.schilling@medma.uni-heidelberg.de)
Freia De Bock (freia.debock@medma.uni-heidelberg.de)
Kristina Hoffmann (kristina.hoffmann@medma.uni-heidelberg.de)
Maren Albrecht (maren.albrecht@medma.uni-heidelberg.de)
Diana Sonntag (diana.sonntag@medma.uni-heidelberg.de)
Joachim Fischer (joachim.fischer@medma.uni-heidelberg.de)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Point-by-point-responses (Manuscript ID: PUBH-D-17-01528)

We thank you and the reviewers for the insightful comments on our manuscript. We have revised the manuscript to address the comments. Below we provide point by point responses to each of the comments. We indicated changes in the manuscript (red and underlined text).

Editor:

Comment 1.1: “Please make sure that the background section includes a statement of the aims of the paper (i.e. a statement that makes it clear what is being discussed in the main body of the paper).”

Implementation: Thank you for this important note. We have now added a separate paragraph on the aims of the paper to the end of the background section.
Reviewer #1:

Comment 1.1: „The figures included with the manuscript are excellent and something that I have not seen before. However, there were several areas where the manuscript lacked clear focus and reasoning. I had a hard time deciphering the true purpose behind the words in several paragraphs. Please see the attached file with complete comments.”

Implementation: Many thanks for the compliment and the remarks. We have extracted these notes, nine in total, from the document. Below, we have specified under each comment, how we addressed these notes in order to give the paper a clearer focus.

Comment 1.2: “Line 63: What countries?”

Implementation: We have now added the countries we made reference to. We have also added a further source.

Comment 1.3: “Line 68: There is a lot of information and different ideas contained in this first paragraph. But, the concept of obesogenic environments doesn't seem to be directly addressed. This should be remedied.”

Implementation: Thank you for pointing out that the concept of obesogenic environments is mentioned in the title, but was not yet taken up again in the text that followed. We have therefore re-formulated the title and introduced the concept of obesogenic environments: Therefore, we have also added an “Aims” section, which clarifies how the concept of obesogenic environments will henceforth be approached.

Comment 1.4: “Line 81: I'm not sure I follow what's being said in this paragraph. It is hard to decipher the main point. I don't really see a focus on obesogenic environments.”

Implementation: You’re right. In this instance, we have not kept to the point. We have erased this passage and have now placed a clear focus on obesogenic environments (implementation of the comment above).

Comment 1.5: “Line 98: Includes in what way? How are these included in obesogenic environments?”

Implementation: We have rephrased this poorly formulated sentence. It is now clear that the lead authors have separated the characteristics of obesogenic environments into four dimensions
(physical, economic, political, and socio-cultural aspects). We now also only mention the four main characteristics, instead of six, so that this passage is not only consistent with Swinburn et al.’s key research, but also with Figure 1.

Comment 1.6: “Line 144: Is all of this information from reference 12 or from multiple studies? It seems like additional citations are warranted here and in the other paragraphs that explain what's in Figure 1.”

Implementation: We have amended the respective sources.

Comment 1.7: ”Line 198: This heading does not match the information written in this section. Rather this section seems to be about limitations in making comparisons between obesogenic environments of different countries.”

Implementation: We agree with your review. We have merged both sections under the heading “2.4. Challenges when investigating obesogenic environments”, and rephrased them.

Comment 1.8: “Line 250: Reference citations should be added to this paragraph.”

Implementation: We have added the appropriate citations.

Comment 1.9: “Line 273: This conclusion introduces new information that was not included in the main text of the manuscript, such as prevention. This could be helpful to include earlier to make your argument clearer.”

Implementation: We have also addressed this and now discuss this aspect in the main text, documenting it with a source.

Comment 1.10: “The authors should also consider looking at the book "Reversing the Obesogenic Environment" (2011) by Lee, McAlexander, and Banda.”

Implementation: We have now consulted this source at multiple points during the revision of this paper.
Reviewer #2:

Comment 2.1: “Interesting article revisiting the concepts of obesogenic environments, presenting a schematic representation essay, illustrating the concepts by an example and concluding on the challenges of this approach to action. However, there are some theoretical and empirical gaps in this article. Line 90: the authors refer to the model of Swinburn et al. It would have been interesting to note that this model is inspired by the determinants of health in the Ottawa Charter (1986) and the model of Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991).”

Implementation: We have gladly added that Swinburn’s approach is grounded on research, which specifically focuses on context and in particular the significance of community. We have also revisited and cited the suggested important publications.

Comment 2.2: “Line 101, the authors speak of community action, it would be pertinent to cite the work of Kumanyika et al. (2002), which focus specifically on the subject (Kumanyika, S., RW, JEFFERY, A. MORABIA, C. RITENBAUGH and VJ ANTIPATIS (2002). « Obesity prevention : the case for action », Int J Obes Relat Metab Disord. 26, No. 3, pp. 425-436.).”

Implementation: As this source illustrates the current situation internationally and the numerous possibilities for intervention, we have cited it at several points in the text. Thank you for your note.

Comment 2.3: “Line 139 to Line 167: a taxonomy of the obesogenic environments is attempted, however it focuses only on the micro environment, why? Because you work is at the community level, its important to mention it.”

Implementation: We agree that the description of impact on a macro level falls short. We have now added a comprehensive description on this level (line 228 ff.).

Comment 2.4: “Figure 1: In your model, the notions of interactions between environments are missing, these interactions should be added schematically. We can see these interactions in the section on your example. It would have been even more interesting to combine Figures 1 and 2 into a single conceptual model. Moreover, from an ecological perspective, the concept of reciprocity is important, it would be important to mention it.”

Implementation: Thank you for the note. Figure 1 already contains a lot of information. We were however happy to incorporate the undoubtedly important interactions and reciprocity with the
help of arrows, and illustrated these by the key, and in the text (Line 161 ff.). Merging Figure 1 with Figure 2 would create a very confusing diagram, by combining two different aspects (systematization vs. casual connections) with one another (Fig. 1 corresponds to the field at the bottom right of Fig. 2).

Comment 2.5: “Line 169 to Line 194: An interesting example, but it would be even more interesting to illustrate it with your conceptual model. Add a figure (empty model), illustrating where the changes in the environment are.”

Implementation: We have discussed this suggestion extensively as a group and designed an additional model. The subsequent discussion revealed that a description within the text, as well as representation in the form of an additional figure would be very redundant. Furthermore, many boxes would stay empty, because for instance, physical activity is not included in the example. Should you as the reviewer and the editor however, insist on such a model, we would naturally deliver this.

Comment 2.6: “Line 200: To complete this section, did you rely on written reviews, how you selected your articles to arrive at the conclusions in this section. It would be important to describe the method used here.”

Implementation: As this article concerns a brief contribution to the debate, rather than a thorough systematical review, we did not deem it necessary to describe the countless sources and studies available on the topic in detail. Instead, we have briefly mentioned a number of recent reviews. The intention here was not to write a “review of reviews”, but rather we wanted to point out the issue of transferability of US American studies onto other national contexts. This however, was not made clear enough in the existing text. In revising the text, we have now merged this section (2.4) with the one that follows (2.5), because this problematic issue of transferability also describes a limitation. We have thus also addressed the additional methodological limitations (Challenges), the reviewer indicates two comments below, in this section. Finally, in this change, we have also taken an objection made by Reviewer 1 into consideration.

Comment 2.7: “Line 204: it is mentioned: Mackenbach et al. [19] come to the conclusion that it is not consistent nor convincing. However, this review was limited to weight, not physical activity or diet. Can you conclude the same thing? It would be important to mention it because your article is titled: Contextual influences on physical activity and eating habits. For example, there are a few written reviews for Europe only, for example on active transport (see: Built
environmental correlates of cycling for transport across Europe.)


Implementation: As clarified by the previous comment, we have now reworked this section. For the point of interest to us here, of the limited comparability of US American studies, the abovementioned quote by Mackenbach is now no longer necessary and we have omitted this passage. The suggested studies (Marten et al (2017) Built environmental correlates…) are, according to our research, not concerned with a review, but rather an original contribution. As we do not reference original contributions in this section, but rather solely cite a number of exemplary reviews, we have forgone mentioning the Marten et al.’s citation on this occasion. We do however, find studies of this sort interesting and have referenced them at other points in the manuscript.

Comment 2.8: “Line 222 to Line 262: The challenges presented are interesting, but I think there are others that the authors do not mention. For example:

The multiple environments in which people spend their time; Longitudinal aspects of the obesogenic environment; The challenge to measure the effects in real world.


Implementation: We were happy to expand this section and discuss these challenges. The three abovementioned publications, as well as additional sources, have been considered and incorporated (line 333 ff.).

Thank you for your helpful comments. Please do not hesitate to contact us by email or phone if there are any questions or concerns about the documents submitted.

Sincerely,

The authors