Reviewer’s report

Title: Trends and correlates of unhealthy dieting behaviours among adolescents in the United States, 1999-2013

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Reviewer: Marte Karoline Kjøllesdal

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Trends and correlates of unhealthy dieting behaviours among adolescents in the United States, 1999-2013

The article describes unhealthy dieting behaviours (UDB) among American adolescents and associated factors. The topic is important and the authors have presented the data easy to read and understand.

Some comments to improve the manuscript

Abstract

The aim is stated to be "to examine socio-demographic differences and trends in UDBs among American adolescents, associations with weight loss intentions and self-perceptions of weight, as well as differences between races." This leads the reader to expect something more on socio-demographic differences than stratification on sex. I like better the aim as it is described in the background section "… to examine the associations between WLIs and UDBs, and trends of UDBs in adolescents across the weight spectrum."

Methods

"Participants with missing data were excluded from the respective analyses when appropriate. A final sample size of n=113,542 was used in this analyses after excluding missing responses." The first sentence is unnecessary if a sample size of 113,542 is used in the analyses anyway.

Tables

Statistical significance is indicated by 95% CI. * is not needed in addition.
It would be good to see the n of the different categories in table 2 and 3. (How many were white, black, Hispanic or other, how many were normal weight with accurate perception and so on)

Discussion

Page 12, 2nd paragraph. Could you speculate on why males wanting to gain weight also engage in UDBs?

Strengths and limitations

Self reported weights could potentially also be in the direction of overestimating obesity rates? Even though European studies have showed the opposite. Do you have access to objective data on other US adolescents, so that you could compare the proportion of weight categories and say something on the magnitude of under- or overestimation of weight? This is also related to misclassification of weight. Adolescents who perceive themselves as too heavy may report a lower (or higher) weight than others, and vice versa?

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.

Unable to assess

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
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Acceptable

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