Reviewer’s report

Title: Preschool children’s preferences for sedentary activity relates to parent's restrictive rules around active outdoor play

Version: 1 Date: 16 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Kristen Copeland

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for clarifying that the purpose of the study was to determine correlations with children's PA preferences and knowledge, rather than behaviors. With this in mind, a few parts of the manuscript should be clarified to properly reflect this focus. Specifically, in the abstract line 32 "behaviours" should be changed to "preferences", and "behavior" removed from the last sentence of Abstract background (line 35).

Furthermore, thank you for clarifying that the activity behaviors studied were parent-reported. This qualification needs to be added to several places in the manuscript so as not to falsely report or misconstrue the findings. The term "parent-reported" should be added to line 48 of abstract (conclusion) line 116 (intro), line 152 and 174 (methods).

Line 190 and 192 should say "On average, parents reported children spent.." to reflect the source of the information. Similarly, line 219 can be modified to say "Further, parents who had undergone tertiary education reported their children's plan on weekends..."

It is helpful that the source of report has been added to Table 1 for the continuous variables; it should also be added that the total week/weekend hours were based on parent report. These terms should also be added to Table 2 and the Table 4.

The term "parent-reported" should be added to line 216, the subtitle on line 224, line 230, 232, 235, 239, 240, 248, 250, 255, 258, and 268. There are no page numbers or lines in the Discussion, but the term "parent reported" should be added to 2nd line "parent-reported behaviours" (or omit this part as the focus was PA preferences and knowledge as the authors state in their response to reviewers) and to three places in the paragraph that deals with this topic in the discussion. Also, "parent-reported" should be added to children's preferences on 5th line of discussion and to the subtitle of the discussion that relates to PA practices and parent-reported children's PA preferences. In the discussion subsection related to PA knowledge, preference and activity behaviors,

The use of the iPad to capture children preferences and knowledge is a strength of the study. To reflect the source of the report, the phrase "by or per child report" could be added to lines 210 and 214

I am curious why the authors only did the multiple regression on the parent-reported child activity preferences (Table 4). Was the correlation between the child PA preference from pre-FPQ and parent controlling rules about play outdoors reported on Table 3 no longer significant when adjusting for demographics or other rules? This would be important to report.
I believe there may be a typo in line 227 - should it say "Table 3" instead of "Table 9.3"?

I am unclear what is meant by the sentence that begins "Further, literature indicates that this may be due to the fact that ethnic minorities are underrepresented in mainstream culture" - it would help to explain further or omit.

Last - the reliance on parent report of child preferences and behaviors is definitely a limitation, as the authors state. But the problem is not only social desirability bias (in which one might expect parents to overreport their child's PA and underreport screen time), but moreover a misestimation of the true relationship between parent practices and child preferences or behaviors. This limitation needs to be clearer

The added references and contextualization with the literature have strengthened the manuscript.

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

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I am able to assess the statistics

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