Reviewer’s report

Title: Developing content for national population health surveys: an example using a newly developed sedentary behaviour module

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Reviewer: Stefaan Demarest

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript falls between two stools: it wants to address the process applied in developing a "short, flexible sedentary behavior module" (p.2, line 28-30), but also discusses the content of this module. This manuscript is well-written, the analogy with the space station [only from p.6, line 135 -143] is pleasant to read but if the purpose is that 'this process may serve as a possible model for our colleagues in other countries' (p.7 line 146) than the added value of the manuscript is doubtful. At its most, it reports an example of an application of 'best practices' in the development of (parts of) a survey questionnaire. As mentioned, the conceptual issues related with sedentary behavior and a (possible) content of a sedentary behavior questionnaire pop up throughout the text. From this perspective, the manuscript is too poor since a detailed report on "a thorough examination of the scientific literature and international survey best practices" (p. 6, line 132) is missing.

Getting manuscripts published in APH is not that dissimilar as getting an experiment on the space station. To achieve this, the authors should opt either to describe the process of developing modules for surveys (in which the added value of the process of developing the sedentary behavior module is stressed) or to provide more details on the development of the content of the module (based on literature review, conceptual development, cognitive testing, field testing,…)

Detail:

p.2 - line 38: typo: results instead of resuts
p.5 - line 109: I do not quite grip why the physical activity guidelines are so detailed here. For what purpose?

p.7 - line 151 "Survey content is reviewed as needed…' What is the purpose of the phrase
p.8 - line 178: It's is nice to know that the authors have created an inventory of sedentary behaviour questionnaires, but to what extend does this fit the framework of the manuscript?
p.9 - line 186: What is the usefulness to refer to table 1 ('Sample of suggested survey design best practices')?

p.10 - line 214: the 'results' described here are results of qualitative testing, so the main focus in this manuscript is not on the process of developing a survey module, but on the qualitative testing of the module?

p.11 - line 238: the limitations mentioned here not limitations related to the process, but to the content of the module (e.g. the need to have a short module has not much to do with the process of developing the module)

p13 - line 276: I do not understand the purpose/usefulness of Figure 1 (which has no title, nor source).

Level of interest
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An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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