Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence and predictors of overweight and obesity among school-aged children in urban Ghana

Version: 0 Date: 07 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Hélène Delisle

Reviewer's report:

* General comments

The paper addresses a very relevant topic, that of increasing overweight/obesity even among children and adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. The study was well-done. The sample size and the sampling process confer particular strength to the study. The paper is clear and well-written although more detail on methods and results should be provided. We would have liked to see the nutrition transition presented in the introduction as a major determinant of increasing overweight and as fueled not only by urbanisation but more broadly globalization and technological advances. In the discussion, the authors should be cautious not to convey that diet is not involved in increasing overweight while lack of physical activity is, something that Pepsi and Coca Cola would like the population to believe. Although it cannot be significantly correlated with body habitus, diet certainly has a role to play. The difficulty is to accurately assess usual dietary intake. In this study, a rather crude method of dietary assessment was used and this should be mentioned in the discussion as a limitation of the study.

* Specific comments

1. Reference 12 is not correct. The study by Ntandou pertained to adults.

2. The studies by Dabone C et al on school-children's body weight and food habits in urban Burkina Faso are overlooked.

3. Line 92: The authors should be more specific in stating that the older the overweight child the more his overweight tracks into adulthood.

4. Would it not be relevant to list the main hypotheses or research questions?

5. The justification for the selected age-range has to be given: why this instead of primary or secondary school age-ran
6. Household assets that were included to assess household wealth should be listed.

7. Sport activities considered to assess physical activity need to be listed. Whether only school activities were considered should also be mentioned. Similarly, the types of home chores that are referred to should be indicated.

8. How were the 60 listed foods for the FFQ selected? Was the questionnaire pretested and validated against a more exhaustive dietary method? The statistical processing and analysis of dietary data is not described. There is hardly any discussion on the dietary data.

9. One has to assume that the classification of household socioeconomic status factors 1 and 2 is in tertiles, according to table 1.

10. Table 4: control variables should be given in footnotes.

11. Line 218: What is the logical reason for controlling for individual factors (other than 'type of school'), dietary, physical and household-levels factors when assessing the association of overweight/obesity with type of school? What factors then would explain this association?

12. Line 274: The WHO growth reference for children is no longer new and its use should not be regarded as a particular strength of the study.

13. The crude dietary assessment method should be discussed as a major limitation of the study which could explain the absence of significant relationships of food habits with overweight/obesity. Was it not possible to compute some kind of a composite score of index as a measure of healthy/unhealthy eating patterns?
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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?
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Yes

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