Reviewer’s report

Title: Nutrition Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Among Urban Primary School Children in Nairobi City, Kenya: A KAP study

Version: 0 Date: 20 Sep 2015

Reviewer: Koen Huysentruyt

Reviewer’s report:

Major remarks

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The authors had three aims in this cross-sectional study. They investigated the nutrition knowledge, dietary habits and nutritional attitude among primary school children in Nairobi City, Kenia. Due to the nutritional transition dietary habits in Kenia are changing, as is the case in many other developing countries. Therefore, the results of this study could be interesting not only for Kenia but also for other countries. The nutrition knowledge was assessed via a structured questionnaire and focus group discussion. The assessment of nutrition attitude has been poorly worked out, since it was evaluated via one overall question only.

It is however difficult to judge the quality of this paper, as so little details are given on the methodology. The authors should provide the questionnaire that was given to the children as a supplementary file. For example, were question 6 to 10 open ended questions, or were they multiple choice ? Were children assisted when filling out the questionnaire? Did all children answer all the questions ? Were the cut-off points to categorize the nutrition knowledge determined a priori? Was the questionnaire tested on a focus/test group before the study ?

The generalizability of the results is not possible to judge, since no info is given on the study group. What was the age and sex distribution? Do the authors have data on socio-economic status, the number of siblings, one/two parents, etc. How did the researches make a selection of the schools, how many schools were eligible? Are the studied schools public or private schools? What meal service do they offer ? What is their policy on the vending of soft drinks or unhealthy snacks at school ? What method did the researchers use to select the children?

Concerning the food frequency questionnaire: Which questionnaire was used? Was it previously validated? Where children assisted when completing it and if so, could this have led to a bias? According to methods section (lines 85-87) poor dietary practices were defined as consumption of sweetened beverages and fast foods &gt;4x/W and inadequate consumption of fruits and other healthy snacks &lt;3X/W. Were both required? Were these the only two criteria assessed ? Please provide the FFQ as a supplementary file.
How were the focus group discussions carried out? How did the authors quantify results? Did all children participate in the discussions? How big were the groups during this discussions, and how did the researchers prevent that it was dominated by just a few assertive children and not reflecting general opinion. If there was an insufficient quality of these discussions, I would suggest to strike it from the results as they weaken the paper in my opinion.

I do not understand what was done in line 132-136. Where girls shown silhouettes of themselves? Who acted as 'reference standard' to determine what was big? Why was it only shown to girls? The observation that boys wanted to be big, how was it made?

Lines 175-178. With what data do the authors support these statements?

How was the eating environment at home assessed?

The relationship between variables has been poorly worked out. Was the overall knowledge used in the analyses? Was there a relation between eating environment at home and food consumption?

In the discussion, the authors state that the main reason to consume fast food and sweetened beverages was the taste and the fact that parents do not by these snacks at home. How do they support the latter? And consequently do they imply that parents should buy these products themselves?

Lines 274-288. The authors did not mention the relationship between eating environment at home and food consumption or food knowledge. What led them to conclude that there is a causative relation between parental absenteeism and nutrition knowledge and practices in the children?

I would encourage the authors to elaborate more on possible solutions for the poor dietary habits and knowledge. Since taste and attitude are correlated with dietary practices should we focus more on changing the perception of healthy food among children? Should we encourage parents or schools more to make healthy food more appealing?

Minor remarks

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Line 46: please provide additional reference to support this statement.

Lines 98-101: move to methods.

Lines 107-108: please provide median and quartiles.

Line 122-123: move to discussion.

Lines 143-147: move to methods.
Line 158: what is mandazi?

Lines 166-169: move to discussion.

Lines 197-200: move to discussion.

Line 225-226: move to discussion.

Line 274: This is in agreement… What is in agreement?

**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.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**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**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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