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Paper: “Overweight, Obesity, and Lifestyle Practices among Adults at an Urban Market in Douala, Cameroon: A Cross-Sectional Study”

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Peer review:

Reviewer 1: Ruth Magdalena Gallegos Torres
Universidad Autonoma de Queretaro, Mexico

Reviewer 2: Jonida Lesha
University of Shkoder “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Shkoder, Albania

Reviewer 3: Adriana Martínez Díaz
Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, Mexico

ESJ Manuscript Evaluation Form 2026

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Reviewer Name: Jonida Lesh	
University, Country: University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Shkoder, Albania	
Date Manuscript Received: 0730/26	Date Review Report Submitted: 04 September 2026
Manuscript Title: Overweight, Obesity, and Lifestyle Practices among Urban Market Adults in Douala, Cameroon: A Cross-Sectional Study with SDG Implications	
ESJ Manuscript Number:	
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Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	Rating Result [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
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1. The title is clear, and it is adequate for the content of the article.	4
The title reflects the study quite well. My only reservation concerns the last part, “with SDG Implications.” The study does not actually measure any SDG-related indicator. The SDGs are brought in later, mainly to frame the discussion. This is not necessarily a problem, but the authors should either make this connection more visible in the study itself or consider simplifying the title.	
2. The abstract presents objectives, methods, and results	
2. The abstract presents objectives, methods, and results.	4
The abstract gives the reader the main information needed to understand the study, including the design, sample, measurements and key findings. The figures reported here are also consistent with those presented later in the paper. I would, however, change the wording of the conclusion. Saying that the high prevalence is “driven by” a knowledge-practice gap goes further than the analysis allows. The study shows that excess weight and several potentially unhealthy practices coexist in this sample; it does not establish that one explains the other. The analysis reported by the authors is descriptive, based on frequencies and percentages.	
3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	3
The paper is readable overall. I noticed more problems with style than with grammar itself. This is particularly evident in the Discussion, where some sentences become very dense because several biological mechanisms are explained at once. The Conclusion has the same problem. For instance, the description of the findings as a “convergent multi-pathway assault on metabolic homeostasis” feels unnecessarily strong for the type of study conducted.	
4. The study methods are explained clearly.	3
The general design is easy to follow, but I was left with several methodological questions. The first concerns recruitment. The authors calculated a minimum sample and eventually included 530 participants, but participants were recruited through convenience sampling. It would be useful to know how recruitment actually took place in the market: when participants were approached, over how many days, at what times, and whether everyone approached agreed to participate. This matters because the composition of the sample is somewhat unexpected for a study framed around an urban market population. Only 23.2% are traders, whereas 42.8% are reported as unemployed and another 24.0% as students. The authors need to explain this more clearly and perhaps reconsider how the study population is described. I also need more information about the questionnaire. We are told that it was bilingual, pre-tested and reviewed by experts, but this is not enough to judge the quality of the instrument. How was it developed? How was the English/French version prepared? How many people participated in the pre-test? Were any changes made afterwards?	

The dietary score is another point that needs clarification. The paper gives cut-offs of $\geq 75\%$, 50–74%, and $< 50\%$ for good, moderate and poor dietary practices, respectively. But I could not determine exactly which items entered this score or how they were coded. The scoring procedure needs to be described well enough for another researcher to reproduce it.	
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.	3
The tables are straightforward and the descriptive results are generally easy to follow. My concern here is not so much presentation as the limited analysis. The paper reports that 54.7% of participants were overweight or obese and then gives the prevalence of several dietary and activity behaviors. However, we do not know whether these behaviours differ between participants with normal BMI and those with overweight or obesity. That is an important missing step. If the data are available, I would expect at least some basic tests of association between BMI category and variables such as sex, age, sugary drink consumption, late-night eating, physical activity and sedentary time. An adjusted analysis would make the paper considerably more informative, although the exact model should depend on how the variables were originally collected. There is also a small but important reporting issue. The Results state a 100% response rate. I could not find the number of people who were originally approached. Unless all 530 people approached participated, the basis for the 100% figure should be explained.	
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	3
This is the section I would revise most carefully. The prevalence figures themselves are supported by the data. What is less convincing is the move from those findings to very specific physiological explanations. The paper refers, for example, to hepatic lipogenesis, insulin resistance, circadian adipogenesis and LPL/GLUT4 suppression as if these processes explain what occurred in this sample. None of these mechanisms was measured. In fact, the authors acknowledge that biochemical markers such as fasting glucose, lipid profile and HbA1c were not collected. The physiological literature is useful for interpreting the findings, but it needs to remain clearly identified as interpretation rather than evidence generated by this study. I would shorten the conclusion and keep it close to what the data show.	
7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	4
The references are generally relevant and reasonably current. I also appreciate that the authors have included literature from Cameroon rather than relying entirely on international studies. I would nevertheless check the references once more before publication, particularly where a citation is used to support a very specific physiological claim. In a few places the claim is more specific than I would expect from the source cited. Formatting and consistency should also be checked throughout.	

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revision needed	
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

There is useful information in this paper, and the sample of 530 participants gives the authors a good basis for describing overweight, obesity and lifestyle practices in this setting. I also see value in focusing on a market population in Douala, which is less frequently represented in this literature. My main difficulty with the paper in its present form is that the analysis and the interpretation are not quite at the same level. The analysis is descriptive. We know how many participants were overweight or obese and how frequently particular behaviors were reported, but we do not know whether those behaviours were actually associated with BMI in this sample. The Discussion, however, often reads as though these relationships have already been demonstrated.

I would therefore encourage the authors to make better use of the data they have. If possible, examine the relationship between BMI status and the main lifestyle and demographic variables. This would make several parts of the Discussion much easier to support.

The methods also need more detail. I would like to see a clearer account of participant recruitment, development and pre-testing of the questionnaire, and construction of the dietary-practice score. At present, I could not reproduce that score from the information provided.

The Discussion contains a considerable amount of physiological detail. Some of it is interesting and relevant, but there is too much emphasis on mechanisms that were not measured in this study. I would keep this material but use it more selectively and clearly distinguish previous biological evidence from findings obtained from the present participants.

Finally, the Conclusion should be considerably simpler. The strongest contribution of this study is the descriptive evidence it provides from this setting. There is no need to make the findings sound more mechanistic than the design allows.

For these reasons, I recommend major revision. I think the paper can be improved substantially without changing its basic research question, but the methodological reporting, statistical analysis, and interpretation need to be more closely aligned.

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Reviewer Name: Adriana Martínez Díaz	
University, Country: Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro	
Date Manuscript Received: 27 July 2026	Date Review Report Submitted: 25 August 2026
Manuscript Title: Overweight, Obesity, and Lifestyle Practices among Urban Market Adults in Douala, Cameroon: A Cross-Sectional Study with SDG Implications	
ESJ Manuscript Number:	
You agree that your name is revealed to the author of the paper: yes	
You approve, your name as a reviewer of this paper is available in the “review history” of the paper: yes	
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Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	Rating Result [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
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1. The title is clear, and it is adequate for the content of the article.	5
The title is appropriate for the purpose of the study.	
2. The abstract presents objectives, methods, and results.	4
Include where Camerron stands regarding overweight and obesity in relation to global data, to provide a point of reference.	
3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	5
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i>	
4. The study methods are explained clearly.	2
- Specify the exact data collection period, indicating the start and end months and years. - Describe in greater detail the procedure used for convenience sampling, indicating how participants were identified, invited, and selected. - Include the sociodemographic variables considered in the study (e.g., age, sex, marital status, etc.) - Describe the data collection procedure sequentially - Describe the statistical analysis in greater depth	
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.	4
- Starting that the majority were between 25 and 35 years old (38.95) is incorrect, as that percentage is not clearly predominant. - Only 36.0% of participants demonstrated good dietary practices. It would be better to phrase it as “was classified as having a good dietary level”, because a behavior is not being demonstrated: rather, a classification is being made using an instrument.	
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	2
-In this section, “SSBs exert their obesogenic effects primarily through hepatic fructose metabolism...”... and subsequently, specific cellular mechanisms such as TLR4, NF-κB, IRS-1, etc described. The problem is that the study did not measure fructose, lipogenesis, TLR4, NF-κB, IRS-1, insulin resistance, or hepatic fat. Therefore the discussion may explain plausible mechanisms previously described in the literature, but it must make clear that these are mechanisms proposed by prior studies and not mechanisms demonstrated in this population. -In section 4.4 explains the circadian mechanisms: ghrelin, leptin, energy expenditure, adipogenic genes, cortisol, LPL, etc The discussion should first focus on the fact that 64.7% reported nighttime eating. -The conclusion should be much simpler. Currently, it attempts to explain practically the entire pathophysiology of being overweight. I would recommend that the conclusion address only four questions: what did you find? What lifestyle patterns did you find? What does it mean? What do you recommend?	

- The current conclusion states: “The physiological drivers of this burden hepatic fructose- driven de novo lipogenesis..., TLR4-mediated muscle insulin resistance..., circadian adipogenesis..., and LPL-GLUT4 suppression...”. This should not be phrased this way because thos mechanisms were not evaluated in this study. The conclusion should fundamentally answer: what did we find? And not: what physiological mechanisms caused what we found?	
7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	5
<i>(Please insert your comments)</i>	

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	☐
Accepted, minor revision needed	☒
Return for major revision and resubmission	☐
Reject	☐

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:

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Reviewer Name: Ruth Magdalena Gallegos Torres	
University, Country: Universidad Autonoma de Queretaro, Mexico	
Date Manuscript Received: July, 11 th	Date Review Report Submitted: August, 21 th
Manuscript Title: Overweight, obesity, and lifestyle practices among urban market adults in Douala, Cameroon: A cross sectional study with SDG implications.	
ESJ Manuscript Number: 19.30.07.2026	
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Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a thorough explanation for each point rating.

Questions	Rating Result
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	[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
1. The title is clear, and it is adequate for the content of the article.	4
<i>Title is clear, however, I suggest not include the “SDG implications”, because</i>	
2. The abstract presents objectives, methods, and results.	5
<i>Yes, it presents all the elements. The information in the abstract is clear and concrete.</i>	
3. There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	3
<i>Probably it is my file, but I had different format in diverse sections of the document. The document has some spelling mistakes. Do no repeat the same cite in one paragraph.</i>	
4. The study methods are explained clearly.	3
<i>Please, inform how the participants were recruited.</i> <i>It is necessary more information about the questionnaire as: number of questions, type of responses, if it was validated or not, reliability analysis, etc. Also, include how the questionnaire was evaluated.</i> <i>It is important to clarify what kind of statistic test applied: parametric or non-parametric.</i>	
5. The results are clear and do not contain errors.	5
<i>Results are clear</i>	
6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	5
<i>Without comments</i>	
7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	5
<i>Without comments</i>	

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
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Accepted, minor revision needed	X
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only: