Reviewer's report

Title: The Wisconsin Assessment of the Social and Built Environment (WASABE). A Multi-dimensional Objective Audit Instrument for Examining Neighborhood Effects on Health

Version: 2 Date: 14 August 2014

Reviewer: Rui Quintas

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Discretionary Revisions

Two main issues could improve the quality of the paper and in particular of Discussion section.

First, the fact that methodologically, the data collection was performed in summer season (2010 and 2011) represents a choice with some effects on the applicability of the instrument. Authors should reflect on the fact that in wintertime, many of the environmental and neighbourhood features assessed by this audit instrument could not be evaluated easily or at all. This issue could be developed and exposed in Discussion Section.

Secondly, WASABE is a typical US-based instrument, created and assessed in USA context. Authors refer some similar instruments/studies performed in Australia and New Zealand. It will enrich discussion if authors consider the difficult applicability of this kind of instrument to the built environment of a complex downtown of European cities. Due to the historical aspects, its features vary, not only among countries but also among regions or provinces within the same country. This issue raises questions about the applicability of ‘non-European’ questionnaires to the European context.

Furthermore, measuring the interaction between health condition and environment requires the clarification of which aspects of a person's health and of their environment are of interest for research, since these concepts are so broad that it is not possible to measure all of their aspects simultaneously. Some reflection on these issues could be done in Discussion Section.

Some references and similar previous works are suggested:

• Built environment instruments for walkability, bikeability, and recreation: Disability and universal design relevant? Disability and Health Journal (2012)
• The selection of items for the preliminary version of the COURAGE in Europe built environment instrument. Maturitas (2012).
• The COURAGE Built Environment Outdoor Checklist: An Objective Built

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests