Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of mode and context on survey results: Analysis of data from the Health Survey for England 2006 and the Boost Survey for London

Version: 2 Date: 6 August 2010

Reviewer: Jeanette Ziegenfuss

Reviewer's report:

The paper is much clearer in this revised format. Many of my initial concerns have been attenuated. Please see below for specific comments.

Minor essential revisions:

1. At first mention of the non-response weights in the analysis, include the characteristics on which adjustments were made (i.e., age and sex).
2. Move first statement in the results to the analysis section.
3. Throughout the results you sometimes talk about differences by mode and sometimes by survey (i.e., boost or core). Using the same language consistently throughout would be beneficial to the reader.
4. In the seventh paragraph of the results, first statement, insert “reports of” before “physical activity” as you only have self-reported data. Similarly in the fifth paragraph of the discussion, change “more likely to participate in physical activities” to “more likely to report participation in…”
5. In the second paragraph of the discussion, you make the assumption that higher reports are more honest. While this is likely the case, that your conclusion is dependent on this assumption should be explicitly stated.
6. In the sixth paragraph of the discussion, you extend the discussion of social desirability bias to conclusions about if there was another household member present. I am only aware of the literature that links social desirability bias to the presence of an interviewer or not – if it does extend further, please include citations. If not, state the leap that you are making.

Discretionary revisions:

1. In the discussion you provide a discussion of social desirability when the interviewer is present, however this is not mentioned in the context of the reporting of physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption, although these are thought of as socially desirable behaviors. How might this hypothesis apply in this context?
2. The addition of the discussion of potential non-response bias is great. I might further it by stating that nonresponse likely differentially impacted the two modes. One potential citation that considers the use of weighting on nonresponse bias that you may want to check out is: Davern, McAlpine et al., 2010.
**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.