Reviewer's report

Title: Weight change in control group participants in behavioural weight loss interventions: A systematic review and meta-regression study.

Version: 1 Date: 8 February 2012

Reviewer: Connie Bales

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The most substantive suggestion I would make is to look more closely at control period duration in your analysis. Many studies have a control period considerably shorter than 6 months, often 2 or 3 months, for example. It would be helpful to see if there is a difference in effects as the time duration increases rather than just lumping all studies with control periods less than 6 mo into one category.

2. I would like to see a difference emphasis or added emphasis on the justification for this study. It is not just a matter of comparing to what has been observed in control periods in studies of other behaviors. With the expense of clinical trials and severe budget restrictions, it is difficult to prioritize the expense of a control group unless it is clearly essential. I think your paper will contribute to the dialog about this and you should mention that in your introduction. Also see Huffman et al. J Appl Physiol. 2011 Sep;111(3):946-8.

3. Page 7, last line. Please provide a reference for saying that UC is not likely to produce behavioral change.

4. Discussion, first paragraph: Last 2 sentences are difficult to follow.

Discretionary Revisions

1. This paper pursues an interesting topic. I think it would be very useful and would cite it if published.

2. I would like to see you delve more into the findings about the UC group, exploring more in the discussion about why this might have been noted. Again, knowing more about differences in the early months of the control period might shed some light.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the
statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'Ve declare that I have no competing interests'