Reviewer's report

Title: An observational study of nutrition and physical activity behaviours, knowledge and advice in pregnancy: Are we doing enough?

Version: 2 Date: 29 January 2013

Reviewer: Alison Gernand

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. How did you decide to dichotomize the knowledge, behavior, and advice responses? (see lines 163-167, 179-180). Was this done after exploring the full range of responses? Could different category groupings be more informative?

2. There is a rather low consent rate (63%). Do you know if women who refused differed from those who consented? This should be part of the discussion.

3. Did you consider a multivariable approach to control for confounding in these relationships? I am wondering if low income or low education is causing both poor dietary choices and overweight.

Minor Essential Revisions

4. There are a number of grammatical and typographical errors across the manuscript. Please make a careful check and revise.

5. Please check the n for the study. The abstract lists 584, Table 1 lists 582, and tables 2-4 list 575. Describe in the methods if needed.

6. Please change “serves” to “servings” throughout, as appropriate

7. In the abstract, please convey/emphasize that no differences were observed between overwt and normal weight women (e.g. statement on lines 210-211), except for the specific diet behaviors you present. In reading the abstract, it is not clear why overall results are presented for most of the behaviors, knowledge and advice.

8. Please check the methods lines 152-154. The scale is defined as 5=never and 1=six or more days/wk for high fat and fiber foods, yet later it states the higher score means higher diet quality. For high fat foods, never would be “better” but for high fiber foods this would be worse.

9. Please revise the discussion to include interpretation of results and avoid repeating results (e.g. lines 308-309).

10. Please expand Table 1 to include a wider variety of characteristics, e.g. age, parity, race/ethnicity, marital status.
Discretionary Revisions

11. It seems like phrases should read either “fruits and vegetables” or “fruit and vegetable” (not “fruit and vegetables”)

12. Did you consider dividing the overweight women by overweight and obese? Reporting the range of maternal BMI, and the % in more categories (e.g. underwt, normal, overwt, obese) would improve the paper.

13. The “pregnancy specific knowledge” section is concerning. The questions used are broad and especially easy to answer correctly in the true/false format. I have difficulty understanding what this adds to the study. As well, the description, “pregnancy specific nutrition knowledge” (e.g. line 257) seems misleading. The questions are general, and not very specific. Please address the benefit of keeping this in the paper, and consider how to improve the description and discussion about it.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.