Reviewer's report

Title: Childhood Hunger and the Protective Effects of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Alternative Food Sources among Mexican-Origin Families in Texas Border Colonias

Version: 1 Date: 14 March 2013

Reviewer: Mary Ann A Johnson

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-written, important and timely paper about childhood hunger in a vulnerable population.

Item #2 is a compulsory revision, that will then influence several other aspects of the paper as noted below.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes.
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes, except the authors should also add the age of the children, which could help explain why many did not participate in school based feeding programs and/or WIC. Also, the authors need to clarify whether undocumented immigrants were included in the sample, which would also explain why SNAP benefits were not being used. Not every family's child(ren) would be eligible for WIC, as the child needs to be in a certain age range.
3. Are the data sound? Yes, except the information noted above needs to be included.
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Not sure.
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes for the most part, but need to address the items noted in item #2 and the authors should emphasize that there are differences in opinion about how “hunger” should be defined, because can use a “physiological” definition or the approach used in this paper.
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes, except need to address the items noted in item #2.
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes.
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes.
9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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' below.