Reviewer's report

Title: Nutritional Rehabilitation in Anorexia Nervosa: Implications for Treatment

Version: 2 Date: 17 June 2013

Reviewer: Jillian Lampert

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These suggestions are considered Minor Essential Revisions.

1. In the Introduction, there is one area that reads as an overstated generalization, and this is in regards to vegetarianism and anorexia nervosa. The statement that “patients with AN tend to consume mostly vegetarian diets…” and then later reference to “the AN patient’s preferred protein source foods (more often of a vegetable source)” seems to overestimate and overemphasize the prevalence of vegetarian preference and practice in patients with AN. While it is true that there is a much higher rate of self-described vegetarianism among those ill compared to recovered individuals (Bardone-Cone et. al., 2012), it is still only about ½ of patients. Additionally, it seems this preference reflects the illness driven selection of very low fat foods, rather than a true vegetarian perspective. It is indeed a consideration to be addressed in nutritional rehabilitation, but of those stating a vegetarian preference, clinically, often vegetarian protein sources are not preferred, particularly when it becomes clear that nutritionally adequate vegetarian protein sources need to include intake of higher fat vegetarian protein sources such as nuts, seeds, cheese to achieve adequate weight restoration. If it becomes clear that the vegetarian preference is an expression of the illness rather than a true preference, patients can often be transitioned to a more omnivore based diet. I recommend including the Bardone-Cone et. al. reference in the article as a more recent study.


2. In the Results, in the paragraph titled “AN eating behavior”, the statement “Consuming only low energy-dense vegetarian food may create a number of problems (28) such as a severe deficit in essential nutrient intake if the choice of fruits and vegetables are not combined in a way to maximize essential nutrient content” is not an adequately clear nutritionally based statement. I surmise the authors mean including multiple plant based sources of proteins in the diet in close proximity, each lacking in one or more essential amino acid but together presenting a full complement of amino acids so as to be adequate for protein synthesis in the body. This concept is not adequately communicated in the manuscript to convey to the reader that plant based protein sources are typically inadequate protein sources and must be eaten in ways that maximize the
essential amino acid content of each protein source.

This is considered a discretionary revision.

1. The title could be improved by incorporating 'review' to more accurately indicate that the manuscript is not promoting new concepts or fields of study, but rather is reviewing knowledge in the field.

**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.