Reviewer's report

**Title:** Using Direct Observations on Multiple Occasions to Measure Household Food Availability among Low-Income Mexicano Residents in Texas Colonias

**Version:** 8  **Date:** 27 October 2009

**Reviewer:** Mary Ann A Johnson

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript provides detailed methodology for conducting an in-depth in-home assessment of food availability in a Mexican population. This research is important for determining the level, severity and characteristics of food insecurity in vulnerable populations in the US. As per the editors' instructions, here are additional comments.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Yes, the authors have a well defined question related to the availability of foods in the home.
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes, the methods are appropriate for a feasibility study of an in-depth methodology for assessing food availability in the home.
3. Are the data sound? Yes, the data are sound.
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes.
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes and the authors clearly show how this methodology advances this field of inquiry.
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes, this is well done.
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes, the authors show how this study builds on previous work in the field.
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes.
9. Is the writing acceptable? This manuscript is well written and clear.

Please make your review as constructive and detailed as possible in your comments so that authors have the opportunity to overcome any serious deficiencies that you find and please also divide your comments into the following categories:

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Add information on the number of people that were asked to participate, but declined to participate.
2. Add a sentence or two concerning the key points that were emphasized in the
training of the interviewers.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
None.

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None.

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.