Reviewer's report

Title: Weight maintenance as a tight rope walk: a qualitative interview study

Version: 2 Date: 14 September 2009

Reviewer: Donna K Ciliska

Reviewer’s report:

The question posed is well-defined and is of relevance to public health. Discussion and conclusions are well developed and logically follow from the data presented.

Major compulsory revisions

1. The methods are appropriate, but the authors should give a brief description of the philosophical paradigm and a (some) references. In analysis, you cite Glazer – if that is the method you followed, then put that early in methods.

2. Description of data collection, analysis and results are generally fine. The quotes all fit the categories, except on pg 14, “holistic eater”. You have described this type as including other pleasures such as “smoking, excessive drinking”, but have illustrated with a quote of someone who no longer smokes and does not consume excessive alcohol. Do you have a better illustrative quote?

3. In the results, the model is good for the discreet styles, but does not illustrate the cross-relationships that the data showed. Is there a way to portray that? If not, should it be in the limitations?

4. Please take out the Curioni reference (ref #5). If you look carefully at the forest plots in that paper, there is no significant difference in weight loss in the diet versus “diet plus exercise” results (see the level of significance of the meta-analyses). In my reading of their data, their conclusion does not match the data.

Minor Essential Revisions

5. Title: Why not put method in the title: “Weight maintenance as a tight rope walk – a grounded theory study”

Abstract: Again, identify the method – grounded theory,

Take out “qualitative research interviews” – replace with indepth, in-person interviews

6. Did people report that over the 10 year period their weight has not changed, or did you use their weight measurement at the 2 time points for inclusion? If the latter, you have not considered whether people have weight cycled over the 10 year period. Would the types hold for people who have gained or lost 40+ pounds but are currently within 3% of first weight record in the program? If you do not
have this data, please clarify that as a limitation.

7. Manuscript adheres to general standards of reporting, except it needs a good edit – some verb tenses incorrect, some awkward sentences, sometimes plural used when subject is singular and opposite, sometimes people referred to as “that”. The titles of the figures and tables should be on the same page, not as a separate list.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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 interest.