Reviewer's report

Title: An overview of ethical frameworks for programs to prevent overweight

Version: 1 Date: 25 May 2010

Reviewer: Jamie Chriqui

Reviewer's report:

The intent of this manuscript was to provide a review of published ethical frameworks to prevent overweight. This manuscript holds the potential to be very useful for the public health and obesity prevention fields.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The title of the manuscript seems to be a misnomer and the discussion does not help the reader get from point A (the intended purpose) to point B (understanding how the frameworks would be useful for obesity prevention). The title led me to believe that the ethical frameworks were focused on obesity prevention; however, with the exception of the Nuffield framework, the frameworks were broader public health ethics frameworks. While this, in and of itself would be okay, the authors took care to note in the methods that they explicitly excluded frameworks focused on other public health issues so I was completely confused as to what qualified a framework for inclusion/exclusion in the study.

2. In your discussion of several of the ethical frameworks (e.g., Kass), attention is paid to issues of internal validity but little to no attention is paid to issues of external validity.

3. In the discussion, I felt like some sort of overarching table/side bar/bullet list, etc. would be needed to explain your recommendations as to what the content of an ethical framework would look like for obesity prevention programs and how/why such a framework would be useful for practitioners/policymakers when deliberating policies/programs. You discussed what each of the frameworks did/did not include but I walked away thinking “so what? Why should practitioners/policymakers care about this?” And, furthermore, what will they do with the information from this article?

4. The statement on page 13 that “the framework should be applicable…to all types of programs)” seems like a rather lofty goal. Please explain this further and how this would be feasible.

5. There was no limitations section included.

6. There is a lot of text in the tables. Is there a way to simplify Table 1 to make it easier for the reader to compare/contrast the frameworks?

Minor Essential Revisions

7. Pages 8-9, I'm not sure what was meant by “by several organizations under
which the American Public Health Association.” Perhaps a word(s) is missing?

8. Page 11, first line under Nuffield, should read “aims to help consider” (not considering)

**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