Reviewer’s report

Title: Household food insecurity and child overweight in Jamaica and Quebec: a gender-based analysis.

Version: 1 Date: 3 January 2011

Reviewer: Luis Rodrigues

Reviewer’s report:

Very good paper. Nicely written and very thorough, presenting a very interesting and actual theme. The authors make a very good job on the methodological and statistical parts. Have a large and representative sound data, and clearly state the limitations. All of the conclusions are supported by the results.

I only have a few recommendations:

Minor Essential Revisions

Page 4, lines 16-17 – It is not clear for the reader why the authors state that “The prevalence of childhood overweight/obesity in Canada and Jamaica appears comparable:...”. See that in page 15 (discussion) authors state that “overall (...) the prevalence of overweight/obesity differed considerably between ....” implying that is not comparable. Please rephrase for a better understanding of the full sentence.

Page 8, lines 16-21 – The procedure that took place for categorizing children as food-insecure is not clearly understandable from the statement. “Children were categorized as food-insecure if they answered Yes (...) to any option in Question 2.” Was question 2 only answered if a Yes was checked on Question 1?...Please clarify!

Page 11, lines 16-18 – Authors explain the use of Physical Activity as a covariate in the model, based on a literature review. In my view, this decision needs a stronger, more robust explanation (and references). There is nothing in the review of literature or in the discussion section that help us to understand this methodological decision. Needs to be better explained, either here (statistical analyses) or in the Discussion section.

Page 12, line 13 – In the expression “(...) the proportion of overweight/obese children was significantly higher in low income families (...)” the term “significantly” implies a statistical significance that cannot be asserted from table 2, given the used chi-square tests. The statistical difference (p) needs to be shown, or the term “significantly”, changed.

Page 12, line 18 – The expression “were also more likely” implies a statistical significance that cannot be asserted from table 2. The sentence is true given the adjusted odd ratios shown in table 3, but in this paragraph the authors are commenting on table 2... Please rewrite the phrase (maybe referring to Table
Page 13, line 04 – In the expression “(...) the proportion of overweight/obese children was significantly higher in high-SES families (...)” the term “significantly” implies a statistical significance that cannot be asserted from table 2, given the used chi-square tests. The statistical difference (p) needs to be shown, or the term “significantly”, changed.

Page 14, line 13 (Discussion) – The two aims of the study presented here are not coherent with the two aims presented in Page 4, 3rd paragraph (line 10). Please rephrase accordingly.

Page 15, line 10 – Why do authors state that “(...) obesity has attained epidemic proportions in both countries”? The Jamaican values, 11% of overweight and obesity combined does not assert s an “epidemic proportion”.

Page 18, lines 9-12 – The hypothesis (obese mothers) seems a little stretching of the data... If authors have clear data that allows them to such an explanation then they should say it more clearly. If not, I recommend to take this sentence of.

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