Reviewer's report

Title: Body weight, weight perceptions and food intake patterns. A cross-sectional study among male recruits in the Norwegian National Guard.

Version: 1 Date: 4 January 2011

Reviewer: Vanessa de Mello Laaksonen

Reviewer's report:

In this cross-sectional study assessing dietary patterns in young men at the military service in Norway the authors showed that the majority of this population finds to be important to be slender. Although this pattern was most related to physical activity and not to food intake patterns, BMI was negatively associated with the intake of a plant food pattern defined using a principal component analyses.

Major points
1. Was the diary pilot study and re-test published elsewhere? What were the main results of the first pilot study and the conclusions?
2. Methods: In the 6th section, 3rd paragraph, how did the authors assessed the memory of the interviewed persons, in terms of time? Was the question related to which period of time in their lives? Was it the same among all subjects?
3. Results: 3rd section, how many of the subjects that thought it was important to have good health also answered that it was important to be slender? This information is lacking and requires further clarification and possible further analyses and discussions. Besides BMI, waist circumference should be also used in the analyses as body dissatisfaction seems to be associated with fat distribution.
4. Further clarification on type of bread is needed. They should be analyzed separately when testing for PCA in order to retrieve the scores. Moreover, pasta and type of cereals should also be specified and they might differ on satiety properties and therefore could be interfering on slenderness, e.g.
5. Discussion should be re-written (see also minor comments). A brief summary of the main findings should be given as a first paragraph. The 6th paragraph should be shortened and added to limitations and its last sentence is inappropriate unless the authors have assessed this information.
6. The authors infer that the guidance offered for completing the dietary could have assured the accuracy of the data collected. However, how the authors handled possible weight change during the week that diet was collected and what to which extend this could have influenced data collection? Please comment on that.
7. The message of the last sentence in the 8th paragraph of the Discussion section should be re-written, because there is no much sense the way it is now.
8. The authors should emphasize their main findings and highlight their new contributions for the literature, and not only discuss them based on previous findings and similar findings.

Minor points
1. The authors should revise minor grammatical mistakes in the text before eventual publication.
2. In the abstract, please also give the age range instead of only the mean. In the first sentence of the Methods paragraph, and remove the 3rd sentence. Please also comment something about the assessment of food patterns at home in the past as compared to the food patterns in the military service.
3. In the background, a reference for the statement in the 3rd sentence of the 1st paragraph is missing.
4. Background: In the 3rd paragraph, specify better the population (e.g., military service of …., Norway).
5. Methods: In the 3rd section, a reference is required for the classification of BMI groups.
6. Methods: In the 4th section, please specify if the days of the dietary record kept by the subjects were to be consecutive or not.
7. Methods: The word weight preferences could be confusing in this context, please keep the word weight perception throughout the text.
8. The sentence before the last sentence in the 2nd paragraph of the Discussion section should be removed.
9. Methods: The first paragraph of the Discussion section should be shortened and added to the paragraph concerning the limitations of the study.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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 interests.