Reviewer’s report

Title: Dietary differences between elderly Iranians living in Sweden and Iran A cross-sectional comparative study

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Reviewer: Anna Karin Lindroos

Reviewer’s report:

The manuscript has improved, but there are still some issues that need to be dealt with.

The biggest weakness of this study is that two different dietary methods have been used when comparing dietary intake. The methods are similar but the observed dietary differences between the Swedish and Iranian groups could be due to using different dietary methods rather than being real differences. It is for example possible that the much higher fruit intake in Sweden is due to more detailed questions on fruit in the Swedish FFQ than in the Iranian FFQ, on the other hand if the questions on fruit are almost identical in the two FFQs it is likely that the groups differ in fruit intake.

Major compulsory revisions

1. The limitation of using two different dietary methods need to be discussed in more detail. What are the problems of not using the same dietary method? Will this introduce differences in dietary intake that do not exist or is this unlikely? And why do the authors think that it is still possible to compare dietary intake between the two groups when two different FFQs are used.

2. The authors have added a confidence interval calculation for plausible energy intake and then excluded potential under- and overreporters. Identifying proportions of under- and overreporters gives some information on the quality of reported energy intake and can be used to identify the most extreme energy misreporters. However, this method cannot be used to validate a dietary assessment method and the data is not necessarily more valid because the most extreme misreporters have been excluded.
   a) The heading “Validation of FFQ in Sweden” on page 8 should be changed to a more appropriate heading.
   b) Why have the authors chosen to use this method in the Swedish group but not in the Iranian group? Excluding misreporters in only one of the groups makes the comparisons between the two groups even more difficult.

3. The confidence interval for plausible energy intake is very wide and the lower cut-off is also very low.
   a) What was the mean PAL in these elderly participants? Is this PAL value plausible? b) Did you include CVwEI 23% in the calculation of S? And if so how
many days did you divide this value with? How this was done is not clear from the methods description.

Minor essential revisions
4. The heading “Validation of FFQ in Iran” on page 10 is not appropriate. This section describes the FFQ and the validation procedure is not at all described in the text.

Discretionary revisions
5. The description of the Swedish dietary method on page 7 is difficult to follow and could be restructured. The description of the food classification system in the middle of the description of the design is for example very confusing. The food classification system is better described in the end of this section together with how the FFQ responses were handled to calculate energy and nutrient intake.