Reviewer’s report

Title: Time trends in social differences in nutrition habits of Lithuanian population: 1994-2010

Version: 2 Date: 19 December 2011

Reviewer: Laura Paalanen

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions:
1. The language of the manuscript should be checked by a native English speaker.
2. Table 1: Could you add response rates per year? Please correct the age group categorization (20–34, 35–49?).
3. Table 3, 4, 6 and 7: Could you add a footnote for x (eating fresh vegetables daily in 1994). The issue has been covered in Methods, but please specify here as well.

Minor essential revisions:
4. Methods/Study design: Could you add a reference to the survey “Health behavior monitoring among Lithuanian adult population” where interested readers could find more information about the methodology of the survey?
5. Methods/Socio-demographic characteristics: Could you broaden this chapter. At least you could add a sentence “Education and place of residence were chosen…” In addition, you could tell more about the question on education.
6. Methods/Socio-demographic characteristics: You write: “The respondents were grouped as living in cities, towns and villages according to administrative classification of the place of residence.” Can you explain in more detail how this was done in practice? Did you link the data to data from e.g. Lithuanian statistical authority and get the administrative classification from there or was the classification based on respondents’ answers in the questionnaire? In that case, what kind of questions they were?
7. The last words in Results are “only in few surveys”. I don’t think that survey is an appropriate word here.
9. Discussion (page 10): You write that “a number of studies demonstrated that consumption of oil-based spreads on bread are common among highly educated people”. However, you only refer to two Finnish and one Scottish study. Could you find support for this argument from some other country or area? When you
move on to your own findings, you could kind of remind the reader of your study population (E.g., "Our findings from Lithuania..."). By the way, we have made a comparative study in Pitkäranta in the Republic of Karelia and North Karelia in Finland (Paalanen et al. Socio-economic differences in the use of dairy fat in Russian and Finnish Karelia, 1994-2004. Int J Public Health. 2010 Aug;55(4):325-37). We found that in Pitkäranta (Russian Karelia) just like in Lithuania, the use of butter on bread was more common among persons with a higher education, whereas in North Karelia, Finland, the opposite was true. Maybe it would be interesting to discuss this in your paper, because the transition period theme connects our article to your study.

10. Discussion (page 12): You refer to recommendations ("the diet of a large part of population does not meet recommendations on healthy nutrition"). Could you add the nutrition recommendations you refer to as a reference? Or does the "State Food and Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan for 2003–2010" include nutrition recommendation to which you have compared your study results?

11. Discussion: In your paper, you use data from 1994–2010, and the data includes subjects that were 20–64 years old at the time of responding. Thus, the data includes persons that have been born during about years 1930–1990. How might this affect the education classification? Might having only primary education or on the other hand university education have different meaning for persons born in the 1930’s or late 1980’s? Please discuss this as a limitation of the education measure in your study.

12. Figures 1–4: Please change 100% as the maximum to Figures 2 and 3 (like in Figure 1). The levels of the food habits are easier to compare like this. You can consider, whether you could use 100% as the maximum in Figure 4 as well, or whether it is better to keep it at 50%.

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no financial competing interests in relation to this manuscript. However, I have co-authored two papers in which J Klumbiene and J Petkeviciene have been involved as well. The papers were related to a project that is not actively running anymore, the Finbalt Health Monitor.


-Prättälä R, Paalanen L, Grinberga D, Helasoja V, Kasmel A, Petkeviciene J.
Gender differences in the consumption of meat, fruit and vegetables are similar in Finland and the Baltic countries. Eur J Public Health. 2007 Oct;17(5):520-5.