Reviewer's report

**Title**: Adopting and implementing nutrition guidelines in recreational facilities: Private and public sector roles. A multiple case study.

**Version**: 1  **Date**: 5 April 2012

**Reviewer**: Patti-Jean Naylor

**Reviewer's report:**

First I would like to congratulate the authors on a well written manuscript and for the use of a well defined framework for conducting the mixed methods research and describing the results in terms of the diffusion of innovation theory. This is a definite strength of the article. The findings are highly relevant to the public health issue of unhealthy lifestyle patterns and childhood obesity and indeed add substantively to the literature on policy based approaches to eating environments.

The following are responses to the key questions and below are the minor revisions that I am suggesting.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   YES

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   YES

3. Are the data sound?
   YES

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   YES

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   YES but I have indicated some small revisions

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes but I have indicated some revisions

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   YES

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   No - this could use a bit of a tweak as it focuses more on the adoption/implementation of the policy and critical factors that influence it rather than the roles of the private sector
9. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes it is really well written and clear

Minor Revisions
Page 5 last sentence of background- this sentence is out of place and should be moved into the conclusions. End the paragraph with the research questions and definitions.

page 6 Adopter, versus partial adopter - please enhance the definition with some specificity so people can relate to what it means to be an ANGCY full adopter- e.g. to be a full adopter all products had to ...... comply with the guideline ....be 50% choose most?

Methods - this section and the paper would benefit from being in the order of the research questions.
e.g. To describe the nature of the food environment and implementation of the ANGCY within adopter and non-adopter facilities(research question one) we audited the vending and food services using the
and implementation using ...... and we also asked for sales data.
e.g. To explore the factors that influence adoption we used qualitative methods guided by responses to an initial survey instrument. These methods included :
......
(this change also aligns your methods with the order of your results)
Then you talk about data transformation. You need to move sales from page 11 back into the data collection section and the adoption question under long term follow-up - p. 11 back into data collection which will make the data transformation and analysis section more clear.

Results
Context p. 12
Please add a sentence or two into the context about the broader context of the school nutrition policy and that producers, suppliers and distributors had made strides to meet this guideline and that the ANGCY was rolled out in that context.

I am not convinced that the long-term follow-up is a valuable addition to the paper or contributes to answering the research question. I suggest if you leave it in that you write it as one sentence in the description section or context about adopter status (that the adoption status was stable over time). This is an opportunity to improve the clarity of the paper because it is already complex and the key messages are getting lost in the volume of the information.

Discussion
The paper would be strengthened with a great emphasis on the role of secular trends in food production and the influence of the school policy. You may not pick up a difference between adopters because distributors have started to include
some of the 'newer' healthy products in their vending mix as a result of increased access and emphasis related to school nutrition guidelines and product innovation that is ongoing in response to the great public awareness of the obesity crisis and demand for healthier options.

Food environment quality - P. 28 last line of paragraph one - I think this sentence is better at the end of the section because paragraph one and two are very related - access to healthy products is a substantive issue, holding the vendor accountable for stocking on a regular basis. I don't know if the funding model is the reason you see little difference between adopter and non-adopter. It is the reason the non-adopter is the non-adopter but not the reason that it is difficult to show a measurable gain in food quality. This has to do with the above.

Conclusions - I think these could be strengthened and should include your key messages see some examples of sentences to modify to strengthen this.

I like the paragraph on page 31 our study showed that voluntary initiatives such as the ANGCY may have limited effectiveness to counteract the pervasive influence of (something like this at the start of the conclusion would be good). However when a voluntary model is in place the keys are in the managers hands.

1st paragraph. First sentence "the keys... are in the managers hands" (rather than relate to the manager). Within a voluntary model the keys are in the managers hands and relate to their knowledge, values and beliefs and perceptions about the importance of healthy eating and the role of food in maintaining the budget. I think it is stronger if you emphasize the voluntary model early. Perhaps suggest that policy dissemination strategies should target their knowledge and beliefs

Line 6. I think you need to separate the concept of voluntary action and meaningful gains. I think that the adopters have taken meaningful action but have they made meaningful gains.

Line 7 you should add/ emphasize the role of contracts (supported by Vanderwekken et al) in this sentence- specify what you mean by funding model "a funding model that has included raising funding from selling unhealthy food"

Suggestion: Voluntary action and meaningful gains may not be realized in an environment of long term contracts, funding models that depend on selling unhealthy food for profit, lack of accountability for change and relatively few palatable healthy products to substitute. Stronger guidelines and accountability mechanisms may be needed and more government support for innovation by producers.

Change Line 4 paragraph 2 of conclusions: This data contributes to (remove will)

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 I have no competing interests.