Author's response to reviews

Title: The characteristics and experience of community food program users in Arctic Canada: A case study from Iqaluit, Nunavut

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editor,

Thank you for the constructive comments on "The characteristics and experience of community food program users in Arctic Canada: A case study from Iqaluit, Nunavut" by Dr James Ford and colleagues. We are pleased the reviewers liked the paper, and we have addressed the comments raised by the reviewers and subject editor. The following changes have been made:

1. In response to comments on the difference between unemployment prevalence (72%) and the fact that only 26% report that the main source of income at the household level is from employment, we added an explanation in the result section on the fact that while the majority of employed participants said that the main source of income in their household was from employment, some said that although they were employed, the main source of income in their household was from income support. Indeed, in some cases, participants lived in households where they were the only employed member of the household and their salary could not support all members in the household. In such cases, they considered that the main source of income at the household level was from income support.

2. We clarified that employment was defined as a wage earning activity and involved both full time and part time employment.

3. The reviewer noted that there was indeed a discrepancy between what was reported in the text concerning sources of income and table 1. We made the correction in the text: the data contained in Table 1 is correct and now matches what is found in the text.

4. In response to comments on statistical power, we added in both the result and the discussion a few sentences on how a small sample size is likely to have reduced statistical power to detect an association between employment and CFP use. A larger sample size would be required to detect an association for this and other findings.

5. We clarified the term "saturation" used to describe our sampling strategy. We expanded the text to include the full term theoretical saturation, the point at which no new users were identified.

6. We have corrected and carefully checked all references.

7. We agree that the term utilization is more appropriate and common in the food program literature. We made the changes in the text.

8. We changed the terms "scholarship" to "research". We also changed the term "toxic" to "contaminants".

9. We added a sentence on page 4, to specify that lower retail prices for store foods at the regional Inuit centres (RICs) is relative to other communities in the Arctic which are more remote from major food distribution routes.
10. We made the correction on page 18 which contained a typo.

11. We added a methods section in the abstract, a "Competing interests" section and the specific name of the ethics committee, which approved our study.

We trust these modifications address the comments made.

Best wishes
Dr James Ford and Marie-Pierre Lardeau