Reviewer's report

Title: Effectiveness of interventions to promote healthy diet in primary care: systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials

Version: 1 Date: 17 September 2013

Reviewer: Mark Harris

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions

Introduction

This review evaluates the effectiveness of interventions to promote healthy diet in primary care. This is an important issue with the increase in obesity in most countries. The Introduction deals with these issues but there should be more discussion of the specific issues related to overweight and obesity and its impact on morbidity and mortality as well as the burden in primary care. Also the argument that PHC is well placed to deliver advice should be expanded on and referenced.

2. Methods

The methods are well described. However there should be definitions of primary care and dietary promotion intervention. The validity of exclusions needs more explanation. Was a sample of the excluded studies checked? Was there a threshold amount of physical activity in the excluded interventions as many diet interventions contain reference to energy balance? Also the interventions considered are very heterogeneous. Thus there needs to be greater justification that meta-analysis of these heterogeneous studies is appropriate.

In the description of the analysis, it is stated that where the baseline data were not reported, the difference in the mean outcomes between groups at follow up was used. Surely this means that the outcomes reported are heterogenous? Can the authors explain how this is taken into consideration in the inferences they have drawn?

3. Findings

The findings are well presented. It is important to describe the intensity of the intervention. In addition to the number of contacts, it would be useful to have some idea of the duration of contacts. While there is reference to face to face contact, this is not quantified.

4. Discussion

The discussion is appropriate including the discussion of the limitations and comparison with other systematic reviews. The conclusions are appropriately
cautious and end with a number of questions which provide pointers to more research.

5. Writing
The writing is of an acceptable standard.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interest