Reviewer's report

Title: Meal frequencies in early adolescence predict meal frequencies in late adolescence and early adulthood

Version: 3 Date: 15 December 2012

Reviewer: Georgios Antonogeorgos

Reviewer's report:

Overall, this is a well-written manuscript assessing the relationship between meal frequency patterns at early adolescence with the same patterns at late adolescence and adulthood. It would be beneficial if authors could analyze their data using a proper longitudinal data analysis methodology (e.g. Generalized Estimating Equations) and provide the marginal effect over time of gender and family structure. Moreover, there are some issues to be addressed by them:

Abstract, line 34, 37 and 38: Add the corresponding confidence intervals for the reported odds ratios

Abstract, line 39-41: Authors should also report the estimated odds ratios and the corresponding 95% confidence interval.

Introduction, page 4, line 81-83: Authors should remove this phrase since it does not offer much in their study objectives and should transfer it somewhere else in their Introduction.

Methods, line 89-91: Authors should report in their study limitations that there is report bias in the measurement of the recorded characteristics.

Measurements, line 124-125: Authors should report that they socio-economical status assessment in age 27 could introduce bias in their analyses, since no SES was recorded at age 15 or 19.

Statistical analysis: Besides the multivariate logistic regression analysis, it would be useful to assess the marginal effect of the exposure variables (meal frequency, gender and family structure) for the study periods overall and not only for all the possible combinations of the two-time periods. The estimated effects should be presented in an additional table.

Statistical analysis, line 130-131: Authors should report if the assumptions for the application of chi2 test were met, and if not, if the reported p-values corresponds to Fisher's exact test.

Statistical analysis, line 142-145: Authors should explain more on the rational of using missing values as a different category for their meal frequency variables. They should also provide an appropriate reference.

Table 3, line 164: Table 3 does not corresponds to Descriptive statistics table
(Table 2)
Prediction analyses, line 172: Authors should report the p-value for each interaction term, here and everywhere else in the manuscript interactions are reported.

Loss to follow-up: Authors should also examine the pattern of missingness in their data and report if it is Missing-At-Random or not. If so, they could perform multiple imputation in their dataset and provide more robust estimates.

**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 interests