Reviewer's report

Title: Parental food-related behaviors and family mealtime frequency: associations in Norwegian dyads of parents and preadolescent children

Version: 1 Date: 26 January 2013

Reviewer: Katie Loth

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Major Compulsory Revisions

Abstract
1. Very minimal information included on results and conclusions. Would suggest limiting background and adding in additional details on results and more specific study conclusions.

Introduction
2. Would define extreme weight control behaviors or offer an example to help readers to understand what these behaviors are.
3. More information is needed to follow-up on the first sentence in the second paragraph. What type of associations between parenting style/family cohesion and family meals have been seen? This is an important piece that does not seem to be followed up on in this paragraph.
4. The “affective environment of the home” and “parental feeding practices” should be defined.
5. The introduction does not make it clear why one might think that parental feeding practices would be associated with family meal frequency. It states that this has not been looked it, but it is not clear why it is being explore within this paper or what the theory is for what might be found.
6. The authors state that multiple parent reported feeding practices will be assessed as a study strength, but do not list what different feeding practices will be assessed.
7. Why is it important to look at this in older children (vs. younger children)? Do the authors have a reason to believe it will be similar? Or different?
8. Overall the authors do not do a good job of helping the reader to understand WHY this association is being examined. What is known now? What do they expect this will add? And what will it mean when the findings are known or what will next steps be?

Methods
9. Were all parents included in the study? It seems that more parents responded that children, so I would assume that those parents who responded but did not have a child participate were not included? This should be more clearly stated.
10. More information on pretesting should be included.
11. The authors should provide more information on the appropriateness of the CFPQ for this population. Also, do they have test retest data for this measure within this population, or other similar populations that could be included?

12. How was the “parent most involved with meals” chosen for participation (over the other parent in the home)? Was this parent’s choice or somehow chosen by researchers?

Results

13. It would be of interest for the authors to be more clear about the direction of associations seen within the text of their results section. As the results read it is very difficult to understand if family meal frequency is higher among homes with particular feeding behaviors or lower.

14. Overall the results section is very limited and more details should be included and discussed within text.

Discussion

15. It is unclear within the discussion section what the authors overall theoretical model for the study is. While the study is cross-sectional and therefore cannot assess temporality of associations it would still be of interest for the authors to speculate on the direction of associations and the potential underlying mechanisms. (Previous research can be instructive in this regard.)

16. It is also unclear if the authors have a good understanding of what is known on the benefits and drawbacks of particular behaviors, such as restriction and pressure-to-eat. This should be discussed more clearly.

17. The third paragraph of the discussion seems unrelated to study findings and should be more clearly integrated to the overall study aims or dropped from the paper.

18. I find that the authors continued description of study findings in terms of the amount of variance explained is difficult to interpret and seems overly specific for the discussion section. It would be more appropriate for authors to use the discussion to explain findings in more detail and to discuss their clinical or practical meaning in more tangible way.

19. The limitations are discussed and the cross-sectional design is brought up, but I would like to see more discussion on the limitation of not being able to assess directionality of associations.

Conclusions

20. The conclusions are very vague. What do the authors think the main message is? What would they recommend based on these findings? What are next steps?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.