Reviewer’s report

Title: Interest in dietary pattern, individual-level social capital, and psychological distress: A cross-sectional study in a rural Japanese community

Version: 1 Date: 2 October 2012

Reviewer: shahul ebrahim

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Motohashi et al Interest in dietary pattern…Japan

This is a well written paper that refers to dietary patterns examined with an interest to find answers to high suicide rates in Akita, Japan. The sample size is large enough and the methodology appears to be appropriate. I have few minor comments:

1. Abstract/Conclusion/2nd statement. This statement assumes a causative relationship between dietary patterns and psychological stress. The study cannot make such an assumption, and we cannot jump into research on interventions if there is no causal relationship. Therefore, this statement could be avoided. Rather replace with a more benign statement “Further research is needed to assess the relationship between dietary habits and psychosocial distress.”

2. The length of background section could be cut-down by one third at least. Some relevant information that now appears elsewhere could be included here but not repeated. For example, the high incidence of suicide in Akita (Methods, fist para), does not belong in Methods, it belongs to introduction/background page. In fact, to gain the attention of the reader, I would be tempted to bring this fact as your opening statement in Introduction. Also, I would conclude the background section with information that refers to Akita and high suicide rates, “…we conducted a survey in Akita p as one of the many efforts to discern potential clues to the high suicide rates, a reflection of high psychosocial distress.”

3. Because this is an active research, I would recommend using active voice in writing. For example, Methods, first statement. Currently reads, the survey was conducted….. Instead I would write “We conducted/developed a closed ended interviewer administered questionnaire survey”. “We included questions on a,b,c,d…” “We measured items specific to individual level social capital by….”

4. Results: generally you don’t need a statement to show what is in the table, as tables are stand alone. (2nd and 6th para in Results). Instead, you state salient features of the table, (as you do in the 2nd para, 2nd statement in Results “The average age…”) and then put “Table 1” in parenthesis. And from this the reader knows, that if s/he wants more details they could be found in table 1, and most readers know that when you talk about age, you are characterizing the study subjects.

5. Discussion: I would suggest cutting down the length by 40%.
6. Tables: As tables need to be stand alone pieces, I would suggest adding to the titles in each of the tables “in Akita P, Japan”.

**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 that I have no competing interests