Reviewer's report

Title: The impact of drought on the association between food security and mental health in a nationally representative Australian sample

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Reviewer: Tefera B. Belachew

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The impact of drought on the association between food security and mental health in a nationally representative Australian sample

General Comments

The study addressed important issues and fills a gap information related to the relationship between food security and mental distress and how this relationship is mediated by drought.

Major Compulsory (revisions) required

a.) Food security is measured by a single item (Missing meals) and food consumption score, how valid is this? There are several food security assessment scales with known validity and internal consistency of the scales. Authors need to justify why they used a single question rather than using already validated scales e.g. Household Food security access Scale or others.

b.) The methodological aspect of how food security was defined based on missing meals and food consumption is not very clear. Which variable was used in the regression models? Missing meals or the consumption scores? Or a combination of these two?

c.) Although there could be a space limitation, the regression tables are critically important and have to be part of the manuscript as it is dealing with mediation effect of drought to help the readers understand better. It is better to reduce the descriptive tables instead.

Minor discretionary revisions

None

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 have not competing interest