Reviewer’s report

Title: Trading between healthy food, alcohol and physical activity behaviours

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Reviewer: Brian B McMillan

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Trading between healthy food, alcohol and physical activity behaviours

This paper deals with an important topic and the objectives of the study are well defined, i.e. to examine the interplay between three important health behaviours in young adults, the trade-offs between these, and the relationships between them. I found the paper interesting to read but felt it could have gone into more depth in places.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The sample size was impressive for a qualitative study but I would like to know more about why the N of 50 was chosen and also why the age cut off of 25/26 was chosen.

2. The results section was interesting, but brief - and I felt it could have explored some of the issues in more depth. Perhaps the themes could have been split into subthemes and displayed in a table.

3. The discussion goes into some detail about possible interventions and it would have been good to see more from the participants about what might help them behave more healthily, if this was discussed during the interviews.

4. The introduction mentions various psychological theories of behaviour and states how these were not used ‘upfront’ to explain behaviour, but these theories are not mentioned again in the article. In my opinion the article could be improved by relating the findings to the theories described, discussing which of the theories fit the data best, and how the theories might help inform interventions.

5. I would have liked to see a more detailed analysis of the health impact of making some of the trade-offs described in the paper – is there any evidence for example that eating more healthily and exercising can ‘offset’ the impact of binge drinking?

6. Finally, whilst the discussion recommends further research it would be good to see some more detail of the precise methodology this research could employ.

Minor Essential Revisions
P4, line 69 – place comma after the parenthesis [1] and [2].
P4, line 94 – might be useful just to say what these are.
P5, line 101 – again, might be useful to say what these are.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.