Reviewer's report

Title: Parent and child interactions with two contrasting anti-obesity advertising campaigns: A qualitative analysis.

Version: 1 Date: 26 November 2013

Reviewer: Vikki A Entwistle

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript reports on a “qualitative advertising reception study” that involved showing 150 family groups two anti-obesity social advertising campaigns and asking questions about their responses to these. The study generated some interesting insights into the range of responses that parents and children can have to different features of social advertising campaigns, and it raises some important questions about the ethical implications of some of these features. The findings and implications are likely to be of interest to policy makers, practitioners and researchers working on social marketing and/or obesity-related health issues.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

1. Re Data collection

(a) Please clarify who reported the children’s weight and height (In the section on Data Collection it seems to be children, but in the last paragraph of the Results section it seems to be parents).

(b) It seems a bit odd that it took 20 mins to fill in the short surveys about ‘socio-demographic’ characteristics. Did anyone not know confidently what their height/weight were, and if so, what did you do in response?

2. Re Data analysis

Please edit and develop the section on Data Analysis to give readers a clearer and at least slightly more detailed account of how you handled your large qualitative data set and how you generated the results and insights that you report.

(2a) I found the sentences about deductive and inductive approaches unclear. HOW in the deductive approach did you ‘draw[] upon the existing literature about social advertising and theoretical concepts about behavioural change’? What kinds of ‘incidents’ did you explore and compare ‘between the data’?

(2b) How did you generate the estimates of the proportions of your sample that you report in the results? (See e.g. 5th paragraph under ‘Impacts of visual imagery..’: “About half of the parents believed...” and 2nd paragraph under
‘Recall of health risk...’: “About a quarter of children reported..., with another quarter perceiving....”

(2c) Please say a little more about HOW you “explored the data for links between the framing and presentation of information within the two advertisements and how participants drew meaning from this information”. How did you assess/categorise framing (what kinds of frames did you look at)? How did you consider the ways participants might have drawn meaning from these or other features of information presentation? (See also point 3).

3. The statement “The content and delivery style of the verbal messages influenced the recall of information” appears in the main text (1st paragraph under ‘Recall of health risk...’) and with slight modification in the abstract, but it’s not clear from the methods or the data presented in the results that you investigated which features of the adverts influenced recall of what information. I think it would be helpful if you could identify more explicitly the ‘frames’, ‘delivery style’ and other features of ‘content’ and ‘presentation’ that you examined and report on.

4. The 2nd and 3rd paragraphs of the Background sections seem to overlap somewhat in content, and I’m not sure how their two opening sentences relate to each other. The sentence beginning ‘Such messages...’ seems incomplete, and it is unclear what principles ‘these principles’ are. Please could you edit to improve the flow of the argument?

- Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

5. The 1st sentence of the 5th paragraph of the Background (beginning ‘Most evaluations’) seems to be missing a few words.

6. 1st paragraph of Results: 9-18 years rather than 9<18 years?

7. 3rd paragraph under ‘Impacts of visual imagery’: is ‘doing what?’ meant to remind you to fill something in, or to indicate that it’s unclear to the audience what the child in the advert is doing?

8. 4th paragraph under ‘Recall...’: stray ‘about’ at end?

9. Make clear that you showed the families tv advertisements (did you show them on computer/video?)

- Discretionary Revisions

These are recommendations for improvement which the author can choose to ignore. For example clarifications, data that would be useful but not essential.

10. In section 1 of the Discussion, perhaps reconsider whether deontological and utilitarian approaches would necessarily lead to the decisions/actions you have
associated them with.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests