Reviewers report

Title: Emotional and instrumental feeding practices of Dutch mothers towards foods eaten between main meals

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Reviewer: Rachel RODGERS

Reviewers report:

The aim of the present study was to evaluate emotional and instrumental feeding practices among Dutch mothers in particular related to between meal snacks. This is an interesting and worthwhile paper, however I have some suggestions to improve the paper.

Major compulsory revisions:

Abstract:
- One of the major limitations of the study in my opinion is the framing as a prevalence study. With a sample of 359, it is hard to justify generalizability or a valid estimation of prevalence. This is evident in the introductory sentences of the abstract but also in the conclusion sections of the abstract in terms of subgroups.

Introduction:
- While I understand that the study is guided by the national guidelines for between-meal snacks, I feel that the first two paragraphs treat this subject in excessive detail and could be tightened.
- I wonder if research question 3 should be reworded in terms of predictors?
- top of page 4: explaining the overjustification hypothesis as being that children "overjustify" doesn't actually clarify the concept

Methods
- Why did the authors chose to not use one of the validated measures of instrumental and emotional feeding?
- Regarding the data analysis, why were the logistic regressions run each time changing the reference group? The authors should decide which reference group is the most useful and use the results in comparison to that group

Results
- Overall the results section is well-written and presents the findings clearly.
- The variables included in Table 2 seem to have been included in regression analyses. It would be good to present the results from these analyses. At present on page 9, there are no values for any of the findings.

Discussion:
- I wonder if the finding related to the mothers' age is confounded with number of children since mothers reported for their youngest, therefore older mothers were likely to have older children.

Minor essential revisions:
- line 7 "reported using foods"
- Line 12: the acronym is not necessary here
- Last line: "parents' reasons for using them"
- page 4, line 11: "previous research has found"
- Page 4, line 12 "snacking behavior, and more specifically..."
- Page 4, line 13, the findings of the Kroller study are not clear to me
- Page 4, line 16, "and, more in general, unhealthy snacks"
- Page 4, line 17 "it has been strongly suggest to advise parents"
- Page 5, line 6 "So far, only one study has been conducted [...] and it revealed mean scores of...
- Page 5, line 11 "To date, mixed results have been reported regarding..."
- Page 5, line 25 "feeding practices among.."
- Page 6, line 6 "surveys, which they could exchange..."
- Page 6, line 21 "whereafter"
- Page 11, line 3 "a minor although substantial" seems a bit contradictory
- Page 11, line 13. "the need to further investigate the potential negative effects..."
- "medium educated" should be replaced with "moderately educated" throughout
- Page 11, last line "Moreover, the majority of those familiar with..."
- Page 12, line 9 "has not yet been established"
- Page 12, line 12 "which may have led to"
- Page 12, line 23 "examining associations between"
- Page 12, line 28 "as an effective strategy"
- the references which are not in English need to provide a translation of the title

**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:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests