Author's response to reviews

Title: Setting Policy Priorities to Address Eating Disorders and Weight Stigma: Views from the Field of Eating Disorders and the U.S. General Public

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Version: 2
Date: 7 May 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Pafitis,

We are pleased to re-submit the enclosed revised research paper (MS: 203005448179325) for consideration by BMC Public Health. The paper is entitled: “Setting Policy Priorities to Address Eating Disorders and Weight Stigma: Views from the Field of Eating Disorders and the U.S. General Public” and is co-authored by Rebecca Puhl, PhD, Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, PhD, MPH, RD, S. Bryn Austin, ScD, Joerg Luedicke, MS, and Kelly M. King, MPH.

The comments from the reviewers were very helpful, and we have revised the paper accordingly and have provided detailed responses to all comments and suggestions (see below). All major revisions in the text have been highlighted in bold font. We believe that the manuscript is stronger as a result of these revisions, and we hope that our changes have sufficiently improved the manuscript. We welcome any additional comments as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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Deputy Director
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Responses to Reviewers

Reviewer #1 Phillippa Diedrichs

Although the issues of weight stigma and eating disorders may be related, it would be helpful to provide a rationale for why the authors grouped together people’s preferences for policies across these issues, rather than looking at preferences for policies in relation to each issue separately. For instance, are the suggested policies likely to be beneficial for both issues, and would people’s preferences be similar across issues and therefore justify combining the two in the survey questions? A sentence or two justifying this approach would be helpful.

Response: Thank you for this valuable suggestion. To address this, we have added (at the bottom of page 3) a sentence and several references to indicate that experiences of weight stigma and weight-related harassment increase risk for eating disorders and weight gain, and thus these issues are closely linked in important ways and have direct implications for health. In addition, on page 5 we explain that policy actions addressing eating disorders and weight stigma have been minimal, but are beginning to emerge, and thus it is important to identify how much support there is for policy support to address both of these issues.

Minor issues:

1) Abstract: The second sentence under the results study is difficult to interpret, please use commas to break up the listed strategies.

Response: Thank you for this comment. We have revised this sentence in the abstract to clarify the specific strategies (with additional commas and numerical distinctions).

2) Method: Third paragraph under “Survey Questionnaire” – should the first sentence read “most positive impact on efforts to address weight stigma and (rather than or) eating disorders”?

Response: We have revised the sentence accordingly.
Reviewer #2: Susan Paxton

It isn’t clear how it is logical to combine an analysis of policies to prevent eating disorders and policies to address weight stigma under the same general umbrella, one being group of psychological disorders and the other being a discriminatory experience. The reason for combining them could to be more clearly presented. (See also last line page 7)

Response: Thank you for this valuable suggestion. As noted in our response to Reviewer #1, we have addressed this issue on page 3, where we have added a sentence and several references to indicate that experiences of weight stigma and weight-related harassment increase risk for eating disorders and weight gain, and thus these issues are closely linked in important ways and have direct implications for psychological and physical health. In addition, on page 5 we explain that policy actions addressing eating disorders and weight stigma have been minimal, but are beginning to emerge, and thus it is important to identify how much support there is for policy support to address both of these issues.

1) p.2-3 It would be helpful for the reader to articulate here what kind of policy actions are to be considered. The implication is government policy but this could be clearly stated, as any organisation can have policies.

Response: Thank you for noticing this issue. We have added the words “government” and “regulations” in several places on pages 2 and 3 to specify the types of policy actions under consideration.

2) Discussion: Why are women more supportive of these policy initiatives – does this mean the policies are less likely to be implemented – legislation tending to be a man’s world? What might be holding policy makers back from taking policy initiatives in the US in light of the strong support (bottom p. 13).

Response: Thanks for highlighting this finding pertaining to gender differences. We have added a paragraph at the end of the Discussion section (page 14-15) to bring attention to this finding and its implications for pursuing future policy actions on eating disorders and stigma.

3) p.14 para 1. How do obesity campaigns fit in here?

Response: BMI measurement may be more likely to occur as part of obesity-related prevention programs in schools. We have added text to the beginning of this paragraph to acknowledge that recent policies have required school-based measurement of students’ heights and weights for assessment of overweight/obese status, and the potential concerns of these practices for both eating disorders and weight stigma.
Specific Points

4) p.3, para 2 “numerous” would be a more appropriate word than “multiple”.

Response: Thank you for this comment. We have revised the sentence accordingly.

5) p.4, end para 1. The final point in this para is not really a policy in the same way as the preceding examples.

Response: We have revised the sentence to clarify this discrepancy.

6) p.7 line 5, omit one “in”

Response: We have omitted this typo.

7) p.14, para 2, omit first 6 lines – not necessary

Response: We have omitted these six lines as requested.

Editorial request

a) Please include the email address of all the authors in the title page.

Response: We have added all author emails to the title page.