Reviewer's report

Title: Reliability and validity of the short form household food security scale in a Caribbean community

Version: 2 Date: 8 April 2004

Reviewer: Stephen J Blumberg

Reviewer's report:

The revised manuscript is much improved over the first submission, with a new level of methodological and statistical rigor that lends substantial support to the authors' conclusions. The differential item functioning analysis is particularly compelling evidence of ethnic differences in item responses.

I have one continuing concern. The authors have chosen in Table 6 to present data that supports their conclusions (the relation between consumption of green vegetables and the food security items) and to ignore data that does not support their conclusions (the lack of a relation between the food security items and consumption of fruit, rice, bread, legumes, ground provisions, fish, sweets, and other foods). I believe that all available and relevant data should be presented, rather than just the consumption findings that are most strongly associated with food insecurity.

Finally, the authors may wish to note that their finding that the "balanced meals" item (and perhaps the "how often" item) has different relative item thresholds than found in the United States does not impact the scoring of the short form household food security scale in Trinidad and Tobago. The cutoffs of two affirmative responses for "food insecurity without hunger" and five affirmative responses for "food insecurity with hunger" are unaffected by the change in the relative ordering of the items.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None