Reviewer's report

Title: Health Disparities and Advertising Content of Women's Magazines: a cross-sectional study.

Version: 4 Date: 31 March 2005

Reviewer: Elizabeth Whelan

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

<<<<AUTHORS â€” PLEASE NOTE â€” this report uses the page numbers of the first draft sent (which was missing tables), not the one sent on March 23 with the tables.>>> 1) p. 1 â€” in Abstractâ€™s Results section â€” should be â€œCompared to readers of mainstream magazines, readers of African American and Hispanic magazinesâ€¦â€  
As it is now, it seems to exclude all African Americans and Hispanics as readers of mainstream magazines (and whites as readers of minority-oriented magazines).

2) Also in Results section of Abstract, you should change wording to â€œwere exposed to proportionally fewer health-promoting advertisements and more health-diminishing advertisementsâ€œ or something to that effect. As I pointed out in the first round of comments (comment #3), I think you should only discuss levels (as opposed to likeliness, which implies statistical significance). And you need to note â€œproportionallyâ€œ because, for ex., numbers of â€œhealth diminishingâ€œ ads in Af.Am./Hispanic magazines werenâ€™t greater than those in â€œmainstreamâ€œ magazines (as shown in Table 3) â€œthey were greater in proportion relative to all health-related ads (as in Table 2).

3) p.4, line 4 â€” I think that â€œindustriesâ€œ should have a apostrophe at the end because you are suing the term as a possessive.

4) p.4 â€” In response to my comment #4 from last time, you said that the Tirodkar citation had been deleted. However, it is still there. Please remove or edit â€” as I pointed out last time, the greater number of food commercials does not necessarily imply a health diminishing message.

5) p. 5, 6, (an perhaps others?) â€” be consistent in italicizing names of magazines. For ex. â€” p.5 â€œâ€œEbonyâ€œ and â€œEssenceâ€œ, p. 6 â€œâ€œCosmopolitanâ€œ, are not italicized. Please check through all other times where magazines are
mentioned.

6) p. 6 you say that health disparities within the Asian community are \textit{of equal concern}, \textit{of great concern}, \textit{of equal concern to those among other ethnic groups}, or something like that. \textit{Of concern}, \textit{of great concern}, stated on its own is vague/awkward. Also perhaps the \textit{within} in that sentence should be \textit{of}, or something else. \textit{Within} seems to imply that the disparities are among subgroups of Asian-Pacific Islanders.

7) p. 7 and 8 near the bottom of each page the sentence about prescription drug classification as positive repeats. It should only be found on page 7.

8) p. 8 what does \textit{other salty snacks} which were coded as unhealthy mean? Please be more specific, especially since a \textit{salty snack} food such as pretzels should probably be categorized as \textit{healthy} under your standards, which includes non-chocolate granola bars as \textit{healthy}.

9) p. 8 are all of the foods/types that you found in ads mentioned in your examples on page 8? If there are other foods or categories that were observed which do not \textit{intuitively} fit into a healthy/unhealthy category based on what you said already, please add them. The work/methods should be replicable.

10) p. 10 citation 22 near the bottom of the page is missing brackets.

11) p. 11 line 4 \textit{food and beverage} should be \textit{food and beverage}.

12) p. 13 in the sentence beginning \textit{The magazines specifically created} you need in there (somewhere \textit{maybe at the beginning, or at the end}) \textit{In comparison to mainstream magazines} otherwise the sentence doesn't make much sense. You also must indicate that you are referring to comparative proportions here as opposed to actually numbers (by the numbers, the minority-geared magazines did not have more pages of \textit{unhealthy} ads \textit{you are looking to convey what is in table 2, not table 3})

13) p. 13 from context - unclear if \textit{all these leading women's magazines} refers to ALL magazines in the survey, or the ones geared to minorities. Please clarify, and clarify the point/intent of the sentence.

14) p. 15 you seem to have an extra \textit{that} \textit{magazines} in Conclusion section

15) Citation 49 is still incomplete (see comment 12 from last review)

16) Citation 52 America should be American, I think. Please check other citations again

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

17) p. 8 I think \textit{mixed health value} should be changed to \textit{mixed health impact} or potential impact in order to be consistent with the other
categories.

18) p. 8- top â€“ I think that â€œpotentially healthy/unhealthy impactâ€ seems better and more precise than â€œhealthy/unhealthy potential impactâ€ â€“ if you change this, be sure to be consistent throughout the paper.

19) p. 8 â€“ states, â€œFood and beverage ads were designated healthy or unhealthy based onâ€¦â€“ â€“ this sounds awkward to me, as if the ads themselves were in good health or bad health. It would help if you were more specific and instead said â€œhaving a healthy or unhealthy impactâ€ or â€œhaving a positive or negative potential impactâ€ or some combination thereof.

20) p. 8 - I think that â€œnonchocolateâ€ and â€œnondietâ€ should both be hyphenated

21) p. 10 (lines 6-7), p. 11 (line 8) (and maybe elsewhere) â€“ you state â€œLatinaâ€ and â€œBlackâ€ magazines - I think you should be consistent with your terms and instead use â€œAfrican Americanâ€ and â€œHispanicâ€ â€“ check for other places where this may be the case.

22) p. 11 â€“ in middle of page, re: clinical trials â€“ â€œabsent inâ€ should be â€œabsent fromâ€

23) p. 15 â€“ It is very important to note that the context and manner in which â€œunhealthyâ€ foods are eaten also matters very much â€“ they can be part of a balanced diet. I would say â€œWhile this is especially true for the foodâ€¦, it also applies to all other foods,â€ or something to that effect.

24) In final sentence, I think that â€œotherâ€ should be â€œtheirâ€ to be more precise

What next?: Accept after minor essential 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:

I declare that I have no competing interests