Author's response to reviews

Title: Factors Influencing Consumer Dietary Health Preventive Behaviour in Romania

Authors:

Dan A Petrovici (d.a.petrovici@kent.ac.uk)
Christopher Ritson (christopher.ritson@ncl.ac.uk)

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

Please find enclosed the revised manuscript including the corrections as follows:

**Reviewer’s report 1**

**Major**
1. The reference related to income has been removed from conclusions. Moreover, the variable perceived barriers to dietary change has been included now in the statistical analysis.

2. It is now acknowledged that the Health Preventive Behaviour model has been previously tested using cross-sectional data. Indeed some variables may suffer changes during the transition process (e.g. barriers to health eating) but a certain dynamic is inevitable in any society. Changes affect individuals at a different pace and it is beyond the purpose of the paper to track the changes in health behaviour during the full transition process. The temporal and spatial boundaries of the study results are now clearly stated in the limitations section.

3. The section on Methods Setting and subjects contains now the rationale behind sample size and a detailed description of the sampling method. The confusion which may have appeared in the first draft of the manuscript is now addressed by emphasising the random route sampling method. The procedure followed in selecting respondents within each household is explained.

4. Informed consent was obtained in verbal form from respondents and the details of the research grants are acknowledged. Two visits took place at respondent address, one to explain the purpose of the survey and seek cooperation, the second to arrange a convenient time for the interview. The research was also supported by the Faculty of Agriculture and Biological Science research grant in March 2000 and consequently was approved by the Faculty Research Committee (ref CR/nf). At that time consumer survey research which did not involve anything other than data gathering from respondents did not require approval from the specific Newcastle Ethics Committee, but that the fact that the grant was approved by the Faculty Research Committee constituted approval for the Survey to take place.

5. The word share has been replaced by segment.
7. The hierarchical stepwise method of regression has been replaced by a general to particular approach in econometric modelling (Mizon 1978). In a first stage, all variables from the model have been specified in the regression model. In subsequent stages only variables identified as statistically insignificant in the first stage have been removed from the model one at a time. According to this adopted approach all variables from the conceptual model have been given consideration.

As interaction effects tended to be insignificant and did not add value to the model, the equations concentrate on the main predictors and include now two additional variables, namely: perceived barriers to healthy eating and self-reported financial status of respondents household measured on an ordinal scale.

**Minor**
6. The abbreviations used in table 6 (corresponding to table 4 in the first draft of the paper) are now fully explained.

8. More details on the calculation of the perceived threat score is now provided.

9. Ulcer is now included in the table. It was not originally included as there are no significant chi-square values.

10. Descriptive statistics of the subjects are provided together with sample sizes. In addition to a sample breakdown by age groups and education, a breakdown by gender is now provided.

11. The clarity and layout of Figure 1 have now been improved.

12. A new table including the psychometric properties of the scales is now provided in the same format as the working paper.

13. Gender was included but did not generate any significant estimates in any model.

**Reviewer report 2**
The policy implications have been considerably extended in conclusions and the difficulty of changing eating habits are acknowledged. The challenging task of changing unhealthy eating habits provided avenues for future research in the developed world as well as in transition economies where economic hardship can compound this issue.

The discussion section contains a more detailed analysis of the survey results in the context of literature and implications of Romania communist legacy on consumer behaviour (the role of food labels in dietary choices and consumer behaviour). The study points out areas of improvement in nutrition knowledge, target groups for health campaigns. The discussion of survey results is placed in a context of a broader set of studies, considerably more attention being paid to the issue of information acquisition behaviour using food labels.

Finally a slight change was made to the original draft: the word Romania has been replaced by “a Transition Economy” in the title.

Dan Petrovici and Christopher Ritson