Reviewer's report

Title: Factors Influencing Consumer Dietary Health Preventive Behaviour in Romania

Version: 1 Date: 19 June 2006

Reviewer: Carl J Lombard

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General
Review of paper
Factors Influencing Consumer Dietary Health Preventative Behaviour in Romania

The paper tries to vindicate the Dietary Health Preventative Behaviour Model (DHPB) in this cross-sectional sample of Bucharest citizens. Here are some comments

Major
1. The abstract. Conclusions- some conclusions are stated relating to income. However income had a poor response rate in the survey and was dropped from the models. No other measures related to income were incorporated in the model and therefor the conclusions relating to income and its effect are speculation and not a conclusion. In the first authorâ€™s working paper on the website of the University of Kent, Working paper No 65 of 2004 a different DHPB model is presented for the same work. It includes a component relating to perceived barriers to preventative action. Many of the items of this construct are related to income and it is a pity that this construct or items pertaining to it was dropped from the analysis.

major
2. Transitional period. Living in the transitional period in Romania can impact on the DHPB model. The cross-sectional design does not help in this regard and the DHPB model has not been constructed with this limitation in mind.

major
3. The working paper (No 65 -2004) referred to has more information on the survey and its design which is needed for the reader to understand the sampling. Why was a sample size of 500 chosen? How was the distribution of the sampled design across the strata? Grouping the 120 areas in some broad socio-economic groups can add value to the modeling. The description of the selection of addresses differs between the two manuscripts â€” random route versus random selection? Was any addresses replaced? How were subjects selected within homes if there were more than one candidate?

major
4. The paper makes no mention of informed consent of subjects or ethical approval of the study.

minor
5. Replace the word share with segment in â€“ a significant share of respondents..â€™

minor
6. The abbreviations used in the table 4 are not well documented â€” one has to deduce them from the text. Examples posdiet KNS, KNO ect. This should be clear to the reader.

major
7. The statistical methods used in the paper are not described. There are a number of them. Why was a hierarchical stepwise model used when you have thought hard and long about your DHPB model? This does not make sense!

minor
8. For some measurements the numeric quantity used in the analysis is described but for certain constructs is unclear i.e. perceived threat. Perceived Threat is the multiplication of severity and susceptibility for each prompted diseases but what then?

minor
9. Ulcer is listed as one of the five diseases prompted but is not listed in Table 3.

minor
10. Some basic descriptive table of the demographics of the subjects should be given with sample sizes. One does not know how many subjects were male or female for example.
11. Figure 1 has ™s floating around and the extra line from D to the link between A and E is not clear. Box F should be labeled perceived diet effectiveness similar to box C

12. A table similar to table 4 in your working paper (No 65 2004) is needed to give the reader some idea of the level of responses being used in the models. The median of income should be reported together with the sample size.

13. You have not included gender in your models but you do include age. Since this is such a basic nominal variable which carries a lot of social information I would included it in the model. It was part of the original DHPB model and came through as a possible barrier item.

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

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes

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