Reviewer's report

Title: Anthropometric measures and nutritional state in a healthy elderly population

Version: 2 Date: 3 December 2005

Reviewer: Giuseppe Sergi

Reviewer’s report:

General
The Authors investigate anthropometric measures and nutritional state in a cohort (870 women; 1,098 men) of healthy elders in order to identify reference parameters for Mexican elderly people. The study does not give new information about changes with age in anthropometric parameters but it could be useful as a reference for the elderly Mexican population.

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

Background
Line 30: The Authors state that “there are no references for the different anthropometric measures in this age group”. This could be true for Mexican people but not in general because there are some papers reporting reference values of anthropometry for the elderly from different countries.

Results
The Authors find only 1.4% malnourished subjects as determined using the BMI<18.5. They justify these results with the exclusion of ill individuals (diagnosed with chronic-degenerative or acute diseases). Many Authors consider BMI<18.5 inadequate for aged subjects. The Authors should consider the prevalence of malnutrition by using an higher BMI cut-off (i.e. BMI <20). Moreover they should discuss the limits, in the elderly, of BMI <18,5 as a cut-off for malnutrition as well as they focus on the limits of BMI threshold (25.0- 29.9) for normal weight and overweight status. A recent paper (Sergi G et al. “An adequate threshold for body mass index.. J Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci. 2005:866” could be useful for clarify and discuss this point and for reference.

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

Please correct the abbreviation of body mass index (BMI not BMC)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

It would be appreciable to include more recent references (only three of them date from the last five years).
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

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