Reviewer's report

Title: Food consumption patterns in the Waterloo Region, Ontario, Canada: a cross-sectional telephone survey

Version: 1 Date: 26 May 2008

Reviewer: Val Hillers

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Major Essential Revisions:

Methods, page 7: Clarify how people were questioned about their food consumption during the past week. Did the interviewers read a list of foods and ask whether each was consumed? Or were people asked to remember what foods they had consumed during the previous week?

The results presented in Table 2 have surprising high consumption of foods that were out of season during the winter months when the data was collected and surprising low consumption of potatoes. [7% of people reported that they ate watermelon and raspberries in the past week and only 1.6% reported that they ate potatoes.] If the respondents volunteered the foods they had consumed during the past week, it is likely that out of season foods were more memorable and thus less likely to be forgotten and the commonly eaten foods may have been overlooked and not mentioned.

Because of the many questions regarding the accuracy of the individual food consumption, check the coding of the data to be certain that it was coded correctly.

I also suggest that you conduct a literature search regarding research that has assessed accuracy of food consumption data. What is the validity and reliability of the survey method that was used in the current research?

Page 12, top: The statements about potatoes are unclear. Raw potatoes are rarely eaten. Were respondents asked about consumption of cooked vegetables?

Minor Essential Revisions

Page 4, 3rd paragraph: Individual dietary habits was were first assessed..

Page 7, 2nd paragraph: The meaning of ‘retail meat’ in the following is not clear: (x) grocery shopping practices and retail meat

Page 11, last paragraph, 3rd line: meaning of ‘their commodities’ is not clear.

Page 12, line 12: The speculation about why people consume a particular food seems out of place in this manuscript. The objective is to describe food consumption patterns from a food safety perspective. Leave out speculation about why people eat certain foods. (Information about availability of yogurt and...
other foods is appropriate for the manuscript.)
Page 13, first line: change 'sour milk' to cultured dairy products'
Page 13, first and second paragraphs: Remove most of this speculation about masculine and feminine foods.
Page 15, end of paragraph on soy: Remove the 'explanation' about why people eat soy.
Tables 2 and 4: change heading for (D) to Dairy and Dairy Substitutes. (Soy milk is not a dairy product.)
Tables 2 and 4: Change heading for (F) to Nuts, Seeds, Tofu
Table 2: 4th footnote: % of respondents who reported eating at least one of the following dairy products or dairy substitutes:

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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