Reviewer's report

Title: Characterization and factors affecting body weight and composition changes during the sophomore year of college

Version: 1 Date: 11 September 2007

Reviewer: Randall Gretebeck

Reviewer's report:

General
The purpose if this investigation was to investigate changes in body weight and composition and factors (housing status) influencing those changes among sophomore females. The use of DEXA in this investigation adds a high level of credibility to the results.

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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)

Title: Use of the word “factors” in the title appears to convey more than what the manuscript provides. Typical factors that affect body weight such as diet, physical activity, etc. are not addressed in the article. Rather, the only “factor” that is addressed is housing status. A more appropriate title would simply be “Characterization of body weight and composition changes during the sophomore year of college”, or some other wording that does not imply that typical factors associated with weight change were included in the study.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

It would be interesting to add a small section to the discussion addressing changes (or lack thereof) between spring of freshman year and fall of sophomore year. It is likely that the majority of subjects, especially those living in dorms would return to their homes, in other words, the same environment they came from when they started as freshman. It would be reasonable to speculate that their weight and/or body composition would return toward baseline. Why did this not occur? An answer is not required, but it is an interesting point of speculation.

Figure 1: While not essential based on the primary aim of the study, it would be nice if the figure separated subjects living on and off campus (two lines) and also show which changes were significant. However, a repeated measures ANOVA would probably be the best analysis in this instance.
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, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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