Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 12 September 2007

Reviewer: Daniel Hoffman

Reviewer's report:

General

This paper addresses a fundamental issue related to obesity in the US, when and how do changes in body weight occur. Very few studies have been able to study weight changes longitudinally and this group has done so very well.

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

No major revisions are expected for this manuscript.

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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)

RESULTS: The first paragraph of the results includes information that should be included in the methodology or statistics section.

DISCUSSION: Overall, the discussion is well written, but there are few minor issues to be addressed.

First, there is no need to include specific results in the discussion section as found on Page 8, end of Para 1.

Second, Para 2 on Page 9 is confusing and should be more focused and Para 3 essentially repeats results that have already been presented, although the second half of this paragraph is highly relevant and informative.

CONCLUSIONS: As a 2 by 2 table was not presented and relative risks were not calculated, it is not possible for the authors to conclude anything about likelihood as to why some students gained or lost weight. The conclusions should be limited to those than can be supported by the data presented.

TABLES: The footnotes for significance do not need to describe the direction of significance, simply "statistically significant difference at p < 0.05"

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

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