Reviewer's report

Title: Intakes of culinary herbs and spices from a food frequency questionnaire evaluated against 28-days estimated records

Version: 1 Date: 18 February 2011

Reviewer: Janice Stuff

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The authors propose a relatively important research question on measurement of Herb and Spice Intake. However, the methods, statistics, and discussion are lacking some important scientific details to clarify the study procedures.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. Consider presenting in title, abstract, and in paper the concept of a 'validation study' between FFQ and HSR.
2. In abstract, emphasize the FFQ had directed questions on Herb and Spice Use; the HSR, was only for Herbs, and Spices.
3. Likewise, under method section emphasize the unique features added to each dietary methodology that targeted intakes of Herbs and Spices.
4. Typically, a FFQ is administered for estimating intakes for 1 year or more. Here, was the FFQ for only 1 month, and the same month as the HSR?
5. Methods - the term 'eating occasion' is not clear. Typically the frequencies are reporting for all meals per day? How is the eating different and determined?
6. KBS Software, page 5, more detail and citation needed.
7. Statistics. Again term eating occasion is unclear and undefined. What considerations for normality, non-normality were made in analyses? Are correlations Spearman or Pearson? For categorical agreement, Kappa statistics can be computed. Asterisks in table are not footnoted, and referenced. Power calculations for agreement, were these prepared?
8. Page 9, statement that there was an overestimation of use. Could this be attributed to the wider time frame of the FFQ, than the one month for HSR? Or was the FFQ targeted for 1 month?
9. Statements of "good" correlations, should be defined apriori by cutpoints or standards of reasonable agreement.
10. As already mentioned, Conclusions, define "good" agreement.
11. Table 1 and 2, explain footnote for *.
12. Table 3. Compute Kappa statistic.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

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