Reviewer's report

Title: National Trends in Beverage Consumption in Children from Birth to 5 Years: Analysis of NHANES Across Three Decades

Version: 3 Date: 5 July 2012

Reviewer: Marie-Pierre St-Onge

Reviewer's report:

The authors have greatly improved and corrected the spelling and grammatical errors of the previous version. The introduction is long and could be shortened and be made more concise. For example, the first paragraph goes rapidly into much detail from studies of food preferences that is not needed (sentences on lines 51-55). The sentence about adiposity and obesity on line 57 comes out of context in this paragraph. The paragraph ends with information on establishment of eating patterns early in life but the middle part of the paragraph does not fit with the start and end.

It is not clear why a discussion of the recommendation for exclusive breastfeeding is needed in the introduction of this paper.

Overall the introduction lacks focus and clear path to the study topic and general message.

Tables 1 and 2: SEM values are missing throughout. For Table 1, there should be a footnote explaining the data. In Table 1, was there a minimum amount of each beverage consumed required to be considered a “consumer” or was anyone who reported consuming any amount of the beverage included in this percentage? Please check the fonts in Tables 2 and 3 (different types and/or sizes).

Figure 1. Please correct typo on Flavorerd Milk. I would suggest labeling “Milk” as “Total Milk”

Figures 2 and 3: Please explain “Cup equivalents”.

Discussion:

Line 274: were released

Line 302: would be appropriate for overweight

Line 331: delete crossed out “Despite the American”

The discussion remains long and reiterates data presented in the results section. I understand that the authors present a lot of information in this paper but repeatedly saying how their results are similar to others’ is not useful to the reader. The discussion from lines 366 onwards is more useful in placing the information on diet trends into context of overall diet quality and health.

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:

No competing interests.