Reviewer's report

Title: Weight and health behaviour related correlates of academic performance in first year university students

Version: 1 Date: 6 October 2013

Reviewer: Ibrahim Al Alwan

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the invitation to be a reviewer. My review is summarized as follows:

MAJOR

1. In the Abstract
In general the Abstract is acceptable, but I found several word-by-word copy from the rest of the manuscript i.e. 1) the background of the abstract is the same as the first paragraph in the discussion section; 2) in the Conclusion of the abstract, first sentence was copy of the first sentence on the conclusion of the main manuscript

2. In the Results Section
Generally the study was based on three groups; first group that passed the first year exam n=52 students, second group who failed n=22 and last group n=27 who did not attend the last exam.

The authors compared high school GPA between the first and last group. In spite of a lack of full data of all candidates (the last group had only 14 students data of high school GPA out of 27), for fairness any data for this comparison, should be taken out. This result was reported in both the Discussion and Conclusion sections.

3. In the Conclusion Section, authors mentioned that the shortcomings of this study, which I agree with them, and they made significant impact on the study.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

4. Table 1 currently shows only a combined data of 74 students. It will be more scientifically appropriate to add also the two subgroups data so readers can understand how many females in each group, dieters in each group etc.

MINOR

5. Title
The authors aim to study the correlation of weight, socio-demographic status and health behavior of the students and I suggest to add “Socio-demographics”, so the title will read – “Weight, Socio-Demographics, and Health Behaviour Related
Correlates of Academic Performance in First Year University Students.

6. Methods
In this section under Participants,
- line #7……. all freshman in age (18.6±3years)…. just a question, that a student as young as 15 years of age will be accepted to the university?

7. Results
Generally the study was based on three groups; first group that passed the first year exam n=52 students, second group who failed n=22 and last group n=27 who did not attend the last exam.

8. First paragraph, line #14 .... Only french fries consumption was slightly but significantly higher in students who did not attend all course exams (0.1 ±0.1 #/week; 0.1 ±0.1 #/week; t=2.2; p=0.028)…. The numbers are the same, is this a typo? Even though the amount consumed is very little, does it make a statistical difference?

9. In Table 1 there are several data that showed SD of more than the mean leading to a minus result, which is not correct i.e. Sport participation, (min/per week) 146.1±180.1.

10. Typo in the last paragraph ..... GPA as well because of the limited n(=42)……. should be (n=42)

11. Discussion
Typo in first paragraph, line# 6 … increases in (over) weight….. should be written as overweight
Typo in second paragraph. Line#8 … we can observe a same trend when ……. should be written as …. We can observe the same trend..

Final comments
Overall the study was well designed and well written. Although the question of the study was well defined, it will be more appropriate to see the results clearly stated in table 1 i.e. the sub groups.

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Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.