Reviewer’s report

Title: Validity of the Australian Recommended Food Score as a diet quality index for Pre-schoolers

Version: 2  Date: 17 June 2014

Reviewer: Chandana Maitra

Reviewer’s report:

I am happy with the responses provided but I would like to further clarify my comment on stepwise regression (comment 5).

It seems comment 5 has not been interpreted correctly. The point that was made implied the need to further clarify the language in describing the methods and reporting the results, since this is a minimum requirement to facilitate understanding of the readers. For example, i) it should be clearly stated that backward stepwise regression has been used, ii) what steps have been taken to address the concern with backward stepwise regression that it does not correctly identify the best set of variables if there is multicollinearity in the dataset, the chances of which are high in cross section data, and ii) it should be reported in method or results (Table) what relevant criterion (for example, F-to-remove threshold) was used in arriving at the selected set of variables. The first step results with full set of controls can be included, at least as supplementary material. Stepwise regression often leads to spurious statistical significance if a small F-to-remove threshold is used. Or the computer package may use incorrect degrees of freedom resulting in greater likelihood of spurious regressors which may not be consistent with theory. While I am sure all these issues have been looked at carefully, what is needed is clearer description and reporting.

May be examples from the following references will help to clarify my comments.


2) Hainer, V., Kunesova, M., Bellisle, F., Hill, M., Braunerova, R. & Wagenknecht, M. 2004. Psychobehavioral and nutritional predictors of weight loss in obese women treated with sibutramine. Int J Obes Relat Metab Disord, 29, 208-216. [Table 1 of this article].

I am not including the above as major revision as I trust the authors will make these amendments.

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.