Reviewer's report

Title: Dietary patterns and colorectal cancer: results from a Canadian population-based study

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Reviewer: Nadia Bastide

Reviewer's report:

The question posed by the authors is well-defined: to identify the association between dietary pattern and CRC in a Canadian population, from the province of NL. There are several recent reviews on this topic (the most recent are Fung et al, Curr Nutr Rep. 2013 March 1; 2(1):48-55 and Magalhaes et al, Eur J Cancer Prev. 2012). But a posteriori methods like Principal Component Analysis used is these study is population-specific, and that the first study in Canada. The high-risk patterns identified are in line with previous studies, and may be targeted for prevention efforts in this specific population.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Table 3 and 4: the number of cases and control per group is missing. Interpretation of data is incomplete without this information.

- Minor Essential Revisions

General:
Page setting:
o Some spaces are lacking
o Tables (title should be on the same page)

Methods:
- Data collection, l.80 p.5: What is the “interview” mentioned?
- Statistical analysis l.101 p.6: On what population was made the exploratory common - factor analysis? It is not clear.
- Have authors tested calcium intake in complementary adjustment?

Results:
What were the characteristics of non-respondent comparing to cases and control who completed the two surveys (PHQ and FFQ)?

Discussion:

- Discretionary Revisions
Discussion:
- 5th paragraph: There are others hypothesis with may explain the association between red and processed meat consumption and colorectal cancer risk (heme and nitrites mainly). This paragraph could be completed.
- Last paragraph: references 35-38 should be presented in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the discussion, with other existing results.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

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