Reviewer's report

**Title:** Trichotillometry: the reliability and practicality of hair pluckability as a method of nutritional assessment.

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 31 October 2006

**Reviewer:** Ingegerd Johansson

**Reviewer's report:**

General

This paper tests the validity of hair plucking, using a specific dynamometer (trichotillometer) to estimate protein energy malnutrition, together with the reliability of the method. If this method would come out as a valid and reliable method it would certainly serve a function due to the simple, non-contagious way of sampling. The method has previously been published in a few papers as valid for estimating PEM, but it has hardly ever been used in studies in text books. The present authors come to a contradictory conclusion than the previous papers.

The study design and its completion seem to be acceptable and the writing is good. Still, the paper does not thrill the reader, which partly relates to the negative results and partly to an overextended text in relation to the negative results, especially this refers to the results section. The paper would gain considerably if shortened and focused on the essential findings only. Besides condensing the text Table 1 does not add information, and Figure 1 is a normal box plot, which should be stated in the figure legend. Therefore, the explanatory text in the figure, though not wrong, may be deleted.

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.