Author’s response to reviews

Title: An increase of cereal intake as an approach to weight reduction in children is effective only when accompanied by nutrition education: a randomized controlled trial

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Version: 2 Date: 23 July 2008

Author’s response to reviews: see over
The Nutrition Journal Editorial Team
Nutrition Journal
Re: MS: 3708766121934397

Attached please find a revised version of the paper entitled “An increase of cereal intake as an approach to weight reduction in children is effective only when accompanied by nutrition education: a randomized controlled trial”.

We reviewed the paper and included all reviewer´s recommendations. Below please find a response to each issue raised by reviewer´s specifying the changes that were made.

We believe the revised manuscript has improved considerably and look forward to its final acceptance in Nutrition Journal.

Sincerely,

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RESPONSE TO REVIEWER 1

Title: An increase of cereal intake as an approach to weight reduction in children is effective only when accompanied by nutrition education: a randomized controlled trial
Version: 1 Date: 4 July 2008
Reviewer: Louise Aston
Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. P.8, line 7: ‘resultant loss’ is a rather misleading term as it takes into account a gain in the control group. ‘Difference in weight change between groups’ would be more appropriate.
   R: The reviewer’s suggestion has been considered and text in P8, line 25 was changed accordingly.
2. P.8, line 7: I am unclear from table 3 as to where the figure 1.48 comes from, as it does not equate to either the adjusted or the unadjusted difference in weight change between groups 3 & 4.
   R: The value mentioned in the text was corrected and it was specified that corresponded to unadjusted difference. P9, line 1.
3. P.8, line 5: make it clear that this is unadjusted result only and gains are no longer significant after adjustments.
   R: This text refers to paired-t-tests analysis to examine weight change within groups. Adjusted analysis was done only for comparisons between treatment groups which was the main purpose of the study. Text was modified to make it clear in P8, line 24.
4. Also make clearer in description of other results which are adjusted/unadjusted.
   R: The results section was revised and it was further specified where the analysis was adjusted or unadjusted as recommended by reviewer (P8, line 25; P9, lines 6, 7 & 9).
5. Abstract - make it clearer in results that there was no effect of cereal alone on weight.
   R: A sentence was included in the abstract stating that cereal alone had no effect on weight according to the reviewer’s suggestion (P1, line 21).

Minor essential revisions

1. P.3, line 15: ‘cursing’???
   R: The word was replaced for “attending” (P4, line 6).
2. P.4, line 11: express as kg/m2
   R: The units were changed to kg/m2 (P5, line 2).
3. P.4, line 14: mis-spelling of overweight.
   R: Misspelling was corrected (P5, line 5).
4. P.7, line 18: change confirm to compare?
   R: As suggested by the reviewer, “confirm” was replaced with “compare” (P8, line 11).
5. P.8, line 1: change 'chart flow' to 'flow chart'
R: “Chart flow” was replaced as suggested (P8, line 19).

Discretionary Revisions
1. Suggest shortening background section by shortening description of the well-known link between obesity and chronic diseases, but include reference to reciprocal relationship between carbohydrate and fat in the diet as a rationale for using the cereal. This is mentioned briefly in the discussion but would be useful in the background section.
R: Background was reduced eliminating unnecessary information as suggested by reviewer, making more emphasis on the rationale for using cereal (P3).
2. Consider some re-wording and ordering of the 'subjects and place of study' section of the methods, which is rather difficult to read - perhaps consider using a flow chart of the screening and recruitment process to illustrate numbers at each stage.
R: A flowchart was included in the section “Subjects and place of study” as suggested by the reviewer (Figure 1).

RESPONSE TO REVIEWER 2

Title: An increase of cereal intake as an approach to weight reduction in children is effective only when accompanied by nutrition education: a randomized controlled trial
Version: 1 Date: 3 June 2008
Reviewer: Isabelle Aeberli
Reviewer's report:

Discretionary revisions

Specific comments:
1. In the results section on page 8 line 1 a figure 1 is mentioned, but I could not find any figures in the manuscript.
R: A flow chart for the subject selection and participation has been included as figure 1.
2. The aim of inducing RTEC in the diet was to reduce fat content and energy density of the whole diet. It would be interesting to see the actual changes in each diet and to compare the differences in the composition and not only the anthropometric and metabolic changes. Was any kind of dietary assessment carried out during the study?
R: Dietary assessment was not carried out in the study.
For example on page 10 line 10 you state that carbohydrate consumption has been increased in your study, but you don’t say anything about the actual composition of the diet.
R: In this paragraph we state that an increase in carbohydrate intake with a nutrition education program was shown to be effective in treating obesity in children. We increased RTEC intake as a source of
carbohydrates. We have changed the word “carbohydrate” to RTEC in the paper to avoid confusion and misinterpretation (P11, line 3).

3. As you mention in the last paragraph of the discussion (page 11, line 1), you have not included a group receiving the nutrition education alone and can therefore not be sure, that the consumption of RTEC has had any effect at all. This would have been a really interesting point to consider. As there seems to be no differences between the groups receiving one or two servings of RTEC and also no difference between those and the control one might come to the conclusion, that it is indeed only the education which makes a difference.

R: We agree with the reviewer that nutrition education in our study was the strategy that made the difference. The study was not designed to test if nutrition education alone was effective but demonstrate the importance of education with other treatments.

4. One of the aims of the study was also to increase between meals satiety by increasing the consumption of carbohydrates. I was wondering if the choice of cereals (they seem to be made from refined flour and not to contain a lot of fibers) was ideal. Several studies have shown increasing satiety after the consumption of fiber rich foods and of foods with a low glycemic index. I wonder if by choosing less refined products the results might not have been different.

R: We state in the abstract and the introduction that by increasing the carbohydrate to fat ratio, the energy density of the diet decreases; this has been reported in the literature to have a satiety effect. We did not test for between meals satiety and it was not an objective of the study. The cereals were chosen because of the high intake among children. A justification of the food products used in the study was included in the text. (P5, line 21)