Reviewer's report

Title: Change in diet, physical activity, and body weight among young-adults during the transition from high school to college.

Version: 1 Date: 22 February 2009

Reviewer: Susan Racette

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Overall Comment:
This is an interesting and important study in which the authors investigated the relationships between changes in body weight, BMI, dietary patterns, and physical activity behaviors from the last semester of high school to the first semester of college in freshman college students. The study was well-designed, the methods were appropriate and well-described, and the discussion and conclusions are adequately supported by the data. The title is accurate, and the manuscript is written clearly. Minor changes are suggested in the abstract.

- Minor Essential Revisions
1) Introduction: BRFSS stands for Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (not study).
2) Methods: In the sentence about the FFQ, there should be a word after “modeled”. Also, there should be an apostrophe after Nurses'.
3) Discussion: There should be a “t” in Levitsky.
4) Discussion: MyPyramid should have a capital “P”.
5) Table 2 Legend: Footnote b should refer to the first semester of college (August to December), rather than the last six months of high school.

- Discretionary Revisions
6) Abstract: it would be helpful to include the number (or percentage) of females and males in the sample, and the number of participants in the final sample (because the data is based only on those who completed the study).
7) Abstract: it would be helpful to include the mean BMI at baseline.
8) Abstract: the phrase “obesity prevention efforts” may be a little strong, considering the low prevalence of obesity among these students. The terminology used in the Conclusion section of the manuscript seems more appropriate.
9) Methods: Please include the total number of students in the freshman class (so that the reader is aware of the proportion of students who chose and declined to enroll in the study). Also, please report how many students were deemed ineligible.
10) Methods: It would be interesting to know if the final weight measurement was
made during the week of final exams or during a reading period right before
exams, because dramatic alterations in diet and/or physical activity patterns
during those weeks may have impacted body weight.

11) Methods: What modifications were made to the FFQ used in the Nurses’
Health Study for use in the current study?

12) Results: It would be helpful to include the number (or percentage) of females
and males in the text (not just in the Table).

13) Results: Why was a BMI of 20 kg/m² chosen as a cut point instead of the
standard value of 18.5 kg/m² recommended by the CDC, World Health
Organization, etc.?

14) Discussion: The observation that those who gained >= 5% of body weight
were MORE likely to eat breakfast and to sleep more is unexpected based upon
findings in adults. Can you speculate why this occurred?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.