Reviewer’s report

Title: Using Multiple Household Food Inventories To Measure Food Availability In The Home

Version: 1 Date: 6 October 2009

Reviewer: Amy Gorin

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript examines the feasibility and utility of conducting multiple home visits across the course of a month to capture information regarding household food availability. The authors provide a brief, but solid, review of the literature establishing the importance of food availability as a determinant of dietary consumption. The question of whether a cross-sectional, single shot assessment of the home food environment is representative of typical household food availability has not previously been addressed. This study has the potential to influence assessment practices in studies of the home food environment.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. A main aim of the study is to examine the feasibility of conducting multiple home visits over the course of the month. The authors report 100% attention among the 9 families enrolled. No information is provided about how many families were asked to participate but refused to enter the study. Knowing this information is critical before conclusions can be reached about the feasibility of conducting multiple home visits in a larger sample. In general, the small sample size makes drawing definitive conclusions about feasibility premature.

2. The results show some intra-month variability within households, although there is also a fair amount of consistency across assessments. The meaningfulness of this raw data is difficult to determine. A major limitation of the study is that the link between food availability and dietary intake is not explored. How meaningful is the variability? Does conceptualizing household food intake across the month serve as a better predictor of diet than the standard cross-sectional approach? Measuring 251 items seems to be a potentially burdensome activity – are all items necessary? In general, the validity of the household food inventory (i.e., as it relates to dietary behavior) needs to be established.

3. No mention is made of how the food insecurity and perceptions of food availability surveys are related to the household food inventory results or dietary behavior.

Discretionary Revisions

1. The introduction, while providing adequate coverage of the existing literature, is a bit choppy.
2. The conclusions are somewhat repetitive.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.