Author's response to reviews

Title: Lessons learned about primary healthy weight maintenance and weight loss attainment. Results from a qualitative study.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor, thank you for the review of our manuscript “MS: 9422342891201332 - Lessons learned about primary healthy weight maintenance and weight loss attainment. Results from a qualitative study”.

We have reviewed the above manuscript according to your reviewer’s comments.

Reviewer: Kristina Lindvall

A. Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Essential revisions: I would like to ask the authors to consider which terms/concepts to use for the three different groups. For the clarity of the paper it is important to use the same concept for the same group throughout the paper.

For example, to decide if it should be management, attainment or maintenance that should be used.

Authors response: The author has applied the term primary weight maintenance to group one and weight loss maintenance to group two throughout the manuscript.

Essential revisions: This is also relating to the previous comment regarding the choice of key concepts. I would advise the authors to when talking about group 2 two choose either weight loss maintenance, weight loss management or weight loss attainment and then use one of this concept consistently throughout the manuscript. This will not only help the clarity of the manuscript. But also if this should be used as a search word it may be of importance.

Authors response: The author has applied the term weight loss maintenance to group two throughout the manuscript.

Major compulsory revision: I would like to suggest that the authors shorten this section marked in yellow. Some of it may be referred to in the discussion instead.

Authors response: The author has shortened this section and referred to some of it in the discussion.

Major compulsory revision: Here in the study design I would like to suggest that the authors state only which study design that they have chosen. Then in the discussion the authors may discuss the strengths and limitations of the design, data collection and method of analysis that they have chosen (under the heading strengths and limitations). Here they could also motivate why they have chosen one method before another (if deemed necessary).

Authors response: The author has discussed only the design chosen and referred to its strengths and limitation in the limitation section.

Between essential revisions and Major compulsory revisions: In the text marked in yellow I would like to suggest the authors to review the text and see what part of the information that should remain, what should perhaps be moved to the discussion (relating to findings of group 3 for example) and what could be removed.

Authors response: The author has reconsidered the text and it has been removed from the manuscript due to the slightly different focus of eating disorder patients compared to primary weight maintainers.

Major Compulsory revision: Please add if the number of focus group discussions (FGD:s) were determined on beforehand or if it was decided by something else (for example that FGD:s were
conducted until it was deemed that saturation had been reached or the number of FGD:s were decided based on the number of participants that volunteered and the group sizes that were deemed as appropriate.

**Authors response:** The author has added in that the focus group discussions were decided based on the number of respondents who volunteered and the group sizes were deemed as appropriate.

Major compulsory revisions: Please add information (only in a few lines) on how the individual interviews were conducted. Where they conducted also with one interviewer and note taker? Where they also transcribed and fed back to the participant? How long did they last? If the design is rather similar this can be solved with just adding "focus groups and interviews" in the sentences above.

**Authors response:** As the Focus groups and interviews were similar the author has added: ‘focus groups and interviews’.

Major compulsory revisions: In the analysis I would suggest the author to follow the same procedure as for the study design. I.e. only describe which method that was chosen for the analysis and then in the discussion (if necessary) motivate the strengths and the weaknesses of the choice.

**Authors response:** The author has removed the sentence describing other methodologies.

Major compulsory revision: Here I would like to ask the authors to please add a few sentences describing how they moved from the transcripts via sub-themes and themes to categories.

**Authors response:** The author has added in a few sentences to describe how they moved from the transcripts via sub-themes and themes. It has been decided to remove the heading category and maintain the headings ‘theme’ and ‘sub-theme’ for clarity of the processes that were undertaken.

Major compulsory revisions: In the first page of the discussion there are no references. I would suggest for the authors to perhaps use some of the references that are currently found in the background and move them here.

**Authors response:** The author has added references from the background and added them to the first page of the discussion. Those references include the World Health Organization and Safefood.

**B. Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)**

1. Minor revisions: I would like to ask the authors to when reviewing the manuscript to stop at each number (under 12) and consider if it should be written out in letters or if it should stay as a number. As long as it is consistent throughout the text it is ok.

**Authors response:** The author has written out numbers under 12 in letters throughout the manuscript.

Minor essential revisions: I am wondering if there could be some more references added to this sentence (starting with "It places")? Currently it is the WHO-report, but I am wondering if some peer-reviewed articles could be added. Suggestions for such references are (also including references describing psychologial conclusions connected to obesity):


Minor essential revisions: Is there a reference to this statement? If yes please add.
Authors response : The author has addressed this statement with facts published in the IUNA report and reworded the sentence to reflect this.

Minor essential revisions: Please add references to this literature (that is mentioned in the sentence) if possible.
Authors response : After consideration, the author has removed this sentence from the manuscript.

Minor essential revisions: Please add the purpose of this questionnaire.
Authors response : The author has added that the purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain demographic information of participants.

Minor essential reviews: Where the FGD:s and interviews recorded? Where the transcripts verbatim? If yes, please add this information.
Authors response : The author has added in that FGD’s/interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Minor essential revisions: For the length of the results it may advisable for the authors to review all quotations one more time and perhaps chose at maximum one quotation for each group (1-3) under each sub-theme= Max three quotations per sub-theme. To me it would not either need to be one quotation per group for each sub-theme, it could be less.
Authors response : The author has reduced quotes to a maximum of 3 per sub-theme. These are distributed as deemed necessary and may not be one per group.

Minor essential revisions: The text marked in yellow appears to be in another font.
Authors response : The author has changed the font of the text marked in yellow to that of the remaining manuscript.

Minor essential revision: Alternative formulation instead of showed- suggested
Authors response: The author has used ‘suggested’ in place of ‘showed’.

Minor essential revisions: For the two following sections that are marked in yellow I would like to ask the authors to please consider if they have support in their findings to state this. It may be so that the statements could be kept but just need to be somewhat toned down.

Authors response: The author has toned down the section marked in yellow as follows: Areas for exploration and innovation could include ways to encourage increased energy expenditure throughout the daily routine such as walking to school and creating an environment whereby supports are readily available and easily accessed by those who require them. Employer responsibilities to staff around food and exercise provision and health promotion may also be a route to explore.

Minor essential revisions: Please check so that the references are formatted in the same way. For example, that it is either a, or a : following the volume. Please also check that you are using either abbreviations of th journal or writing out the full name. Please do so consistently for all references.

Authors response: The author has checked and corrected all references to adhere to those set out by the relevant journal and to maintain consistency all journals have been written out in full.

Minor essential revisions: Please add table legends to table a and a legend to appendix a.

Authors response: The author has added table legends to table a and a legend to appendix a.

Minor essential revision: What does a yes stand for? Drinking or not or does it correspond to a certain amount? The same goes for smoking. Is it daily smoking? And please consider if these two factors are of key importance for the manuscript. As well as the factor of number of children. If yes, please keep. If no, please remove.

Authors response: The author reconsidered including the factors of alcohol, smoking and children and has therefore removed them from the manuscript.

To me two aspects that would be interesting to include in this table (if possible and appropriate) are nr of normal weight, overweight (and obese) by the time of the study and number of primary weight maintainer, nr of secondary weight maintainers (weight loss maintainers) and gainers (members of group 3)

Authors response: The author has added this information to the table in the manuscript.

IN DISCUSSION SEC ITON Reference here? If yes please add.

Authors response: The author has added in ‘personal communication’ for this reference.

Another font acknowledgements

Authors response: The author has changed the font to that of the manuscript.

Minor essential revisions: Were the groups divided only based on their weight development or were they for example divided by sex or by position at the university/income? If yes, please add here in the method and motivate briefly why. If no please discuss in the methodological part of the discussion the effect that a heterogeneous grouping (in terms of for example sex, income, position at university) may have had on the focus group discussions.

Authors response: The author has moved the sentences following ‘Quota sampling was then applied to allow the population under study to be divided into sub-groups fitting the 3 different
groups related to weight control’ further down the paragraph to make it clearer that the groups were divided based on weight control.

C. Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Discretionary revisions: Please consider if You based on your findings are able to state this last part of the sentence "are all potentially modifiable with life-coach, nutrition, exercise and cognitive interventions particularly if peer support and a whole family approach is incorporated" or if it should be somewhat "toned down".
   Authors response : After consideration the author has decided that based on our findings, this statement is relevant and necessary. It has therefore remained in the manuscript.

2. Discretionary revisions: Within the Swedish research studies the concept primary weight maintenance "PWM" is used without the "healthy". But this is of course a choice of the authors if they wish to use this concept or not.
   Another reference to where you could read more about the Swedish conceptual framework for using PWM can be found on page 6-8 in a thesis that is linked to here below (but please note that this is only a descriptive comment that may be omitted): http://umu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:643681/FULLTEXT01.pdf
   Authors response : The author has used Primary Weight Maintenance (PMW) without ‘healthy’ throughout the manuscript in line with previous use of this concept.

Discretionary revision: Suggestion to remove this sentence (starting with "Although obesity"). Even though it is important in terms of that it is showing that this is a growing public health issue it could perhaps be removed since this manuscript is not focusing on low and middle income countries.
   Authors response : The author has removed the sentence beginning with ‘Although obesity’ from the manuscript.

Discretionary revisions: Please consider if "staggering" is the word that you would like to use. An alternative formulation may be "large" / "of great importance". This comment relates to that you may wish to be careful with these "powerful" words so that it does not sound more negative/stigmatizing for individuals and groups that currently are overweight/obese.
   Authors response : The author has replaced the word staggering with the word ‘considerable’.

Discretionary revisions: Please consider if this sentence could be removed. Even though it is important in terms of that it is showing the related consequences of obesity it could perhaps be removed due to that diabetes per se is not the main focus of this manuscript.
   Authors response : The author has removed the sentence referring to diabetes from the manuscript.

Discretionary revisions: In the Swedish research studies this concept is termed: Secondary weight maintenance (SWM). In other research this has been labelled as weight loss maintenance (without abbreviation). But this is of course a choice of the authors if they wish to use another abbreviation/concept.
   Authors response : The author has used the term Secondary weight maintenance in this instance (SWM).
Discretionary revisions: Here I would suggest the authors to remove the word "recent" and also to state that it is two reviews that they are referring to.

Authors response: The author has removed the word ‘recent’ and reference has been made to the use of two articles suggested.

Discretionary revision: One alternative formulation focusing only on what has been done (with a slightly different terminology) is to say: In the analysis the focus was to study/explore the manifest meaning of the data using/focusing on the everyday language (of the participants?)

Authors response: The author has rephrased this sentence to state: The purpose of this study was to examine the behaviours, strategies and attitudes associated with primary weight maintenance, weight loss maintenance and weight gain amongst staff at an Irish University.

Discretionary revisions: Depending on which concepts the authors chose the aim may be somewhat rephrased. One alternative formulation of the aim is: The purpose of this study was to examine the behaviours, strategies and attitudes associated with primary weight maintenance, weight loss maintenance and weight gain amongst staff at an Irish University.

Authors response: The author has rephrased this sentence to state: The purpose of this study was to examine the behaviours, strategies and attitudes associated with primary weight maintenance, weight loss maintenance and weight gain amongst staff at an Irish University in line with the concept.

Please see earlier comments regarding key concepts.

Authors response: As per earlier comment regarding key concepts the author has removed ‘healthy’ and primary weight maintenance used throughout the manuscript.

Discretionary revision: One alternative formulation focusing only on what has been done (with a slightly different terminology) is to say: In the analysis the focus was to study/explore the manifest meaning of the data focusing on the everyday language of the participants.

Authors response: The author has moved the whole sentence to the discussion section of the manuscript.

Suggestion to remove the last part of this sentence (also if it is moved to the discussion).

Authors response: The author has moved the whole sentence to the discussion section of the manuscript.

Discretionary revisions: Was there a reason for "only" choosing University staff and not participants from other sectors? If yes, please add. For example, was this study a part of a larger study that had been ongoing? Was it believed that University staff would be an appropriate target group for an intervention aiming at PWM?

Authors response: The author has added the reason for choosing this particular group as follows: This group of participants comprised of a purposive sample that would form the basis for a much larger population study to be conducted in the future.

Discretionary revision: I would like to ask the authors to consider to add one sentence in the limitations section of the discussion regarding that it may be a limitation that the weight development is self-reported.

Especially for women it has been seen in previous research that they tend to underreport their weight. Ref:

Authors response: The author has added a sentence to the limitations section of the discussion to show self-reporting as a limitation.
Discretionary revisions: In Sweden you are by law required to save the data (including the transcripts) for a certain number of years after the study has been conducted. But for Ireland the regulation may be different. Then please omit this comment.

Authors response: In Ireland it is a requirement that transcripts be deleted following transcription to protect the privacy of the participants therefore this comment has been omitted.

Discretionary revisions: Healthy?

Authors response: As per previous comment the author has removed the word ‘healthy’.

Discretionary revisions: Alternative formulation: The aspect of strategizing was not seen in group 3.

Authors response: The author has replaced the sentence ‘There was no evidence of strategizing in group 3’ with ‘The aspect of strategizing was not seen in group three’.

Discretionary revisions: Please consider if this sub-theme should be renamed since there is a category called behavioural control.

Authors response: The author has replaced the sub-theme ‘control’ with ‘determination’.

Discretionary revision: It is good if the sub-theme could have a value or a "direction". For example regular exercise (even if group nr 3 does not have it)

Authors response: The author has added ‘regular’ to the sub-theme ‘exercise’.

Discretionary revisions: Alternative sub-theme: Major life events

Authors response: The author has changed ‘life events’ to ‘major life events’.

Discretionary revision: Alternative formulation: To maintain health

Authors response: The author has added the sub-theme ‘to maintain health’.

Discretionary revisions: To me it is not quite clear how this sub-theme answers to the purpose of the study. To me it describes the weight development history and to some extent the hereditary prerequisites (genetic and social) that the participants have. But perhaps it may just need to be clarified with a few words.

Authors response:

Discretionary revisions: Please consider removing the quotations marked in yellow.

Authors response: The author has removed the quotations marked in yellow from the manuscript.

Discretionary revisions: Has this been used in any other setting/ been recommended in any other study? If yes please add reference(s) to this.

Authors response: The author has made reference to the relevant source: Safefood’s ‘Stop the spread’ campaign.

Discretionary revisions: Theories that may also be beneficial to refer to if the authors deem that to be useful are the socio ecological theory (REF: National Cancer Institute: Theory at a glance. 2nd Ed. 2005. Or Ref: McLeroy KR, Bibeau D, Steckler A, Glanz K: An ecological perspective on health promotion programs. Health Educ Q
1988, 15:351-377) or the social determinants of health (Dahlgren and Whitehead). These theories address the aspect that it is the individual in combination with different layers/levels of society that will affect the weight development.

Authors response: The author has felt it useful and referred to the socio-ecological theory of McElroy et al.

Discretionary revision: Alternative formulation: May
Authors response: The author has replaced ‘should’ with ‘may’.