Author's response to reviews

Title: Fifty Years of Fat: News Coverage of Trends that Predate Obesity Rates

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Version: 3 Date: 22 April 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
April 21, 2015

Shane A Norris  
Associate Editor  
*BMC Public Health*

Dear Professor Norris,

Thank you to you and the review team for suggesting changes to our Research Article now titled, “Fifty Years of Fat: News Coverage of Trends that Predate Obesity Prevalence.” We appreciate your helpful comments and have addressed them in this resubmission.

Note that we have not included a separate response to reviewers, but we do address changes in this letter, as you requested.

- We changed the language to be more scientific, switching from first to third person and reducing repetition in the paper.
- We addressed all of the major compulsory revisions requested by both reviewers:
  - The abstract now includes the suggested content.
  - Figure 1 is now correct.
  - Reviewer 1 mentioned that “the results comparing mentions of foods and co-morbidities appear out of nowhere.” We agree, and we think that introducing this in the background would also appear out of nowhere, so we eliminate the noted paragraph from the current revision. We can put it back in and develop the background more if the reviewers prefer this.
  - Reviewer 1 mentioned that “more than half of the discussion contains limitations of the study.” We shortened the limitation part of the discussion section without eliminating critical points.
  - Reviewer 2 requested a new table for the UK. We include this new table.
  - Reviewer 2 suggested a “discretionary revision” for new analyses relating the changes in food mentions to the changes in obesity prevalence. Given the short deadline to turn this submission back in, the analyses have not been changed.
  - Reviewer 2 suggested several language changes, which we addressed.
  - Reviewer 2 mentioned a confusing statement in the limitations section: “I don’t quite understand this. When a single article contains more than one of the terms, the number of media mentions could be deflated or inflated depending on whether you counted articles or mentions, but not both at the same time?” We agree that this was (regretfully) confusing. We were trying to say that some articles might contain more than one term in a category (e.g., one article might contain “chocolate” and “cake” for the category of sweet snacks), on the one hand. And some terms may appear more or less in a single article (e.g., “chocolate” may appear once in one article and 20 times in another). Thus, media mentions as a way to quantify media exposure may be either inflated or deflated. However, we do not think either is a major problem because comparatively from year to year there would be similar possible patterns. Since we are trying to shorten the limitations section, these confusing sentences have been eliminated.
We have addressed these and the remaining issues directly in the text. We attempted to address all concerns of the editor and reviewers in the manuscript.

We have no conflicts of interest and affirm that the results of this study are not published or under consideration for publication elsewhere. Both authors have seen and approved the contents of the submitted manuscript. We look forward to the feedback of the reviewers and the editors. Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Wansink and Brennan Davis