Reviewer’s report

Title: Influences on Eating and Physical Activity Behaviors: A Qualitative Study of Adolescents in a Periurban Area in Lima, Peru

Version: 2 Date: 28 September 2015

Reviewer: Carmen Castaneda Castaneda-Sceppa

Reviewer’s report:

The aims of this study was to understand socio-cultural influences on eating and physical activity among adolescents in periurban Lima, Peru using qualitative methods. Semi-structured interviews and pile sort activities were conducted with 14 adolescents 15–17 years. The authors found that individual influences on behavior included lack of financial resources to purchase food and concerns about body image. Nutrition-related knowledge also played a role; participants noted the importance of foods such as beans for anemia prevention. At the social environmental level, parents promoted healthy eating by providing advice on food selection and home-cooked meals. The physical environment also influenced intake, with foods available in schools being predominantly low-nutrient energy-dense. Macrosystem influences were evident, as adolescents used the Internet for nutrition information, which they viewed as credible.

Understanding the influential factors and context in which eating and physical activity decisions are made among adolescents is important, particularly when targeting low-income and ethnic minority populations. However, in order to make a stronger case of the results and interpretation of the data presented, I believe some issues need to be addressed.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1) As acknowledged by the authors, this is a small study (n=14 adolescents), and thus, the findings are preliminary. The authors need to described the processes and methods used to arrive to saturation of the qualitative information when choosing the sample size, particularly when semi-structured interviews are used, which does not provide more in-depth discussion like focus groups. Were different themes observed in adolescent men vs. women, between adolescents always living in the area vs. those coming from larger cities, was there an influence of socioeconomic status and education level, etc.

2) There is limited information about physical activity. Most of the findings provided in the paper refer to eating factors. The authors need to expand of the physical activity information derived from this qualitative study.

3) There needs to be more discussion about the findings of this study in comparison with other populations within Peru, Latin America, and beyond. This will help the reader understand the influential factors and context in which eating and physical activity decisions are made among adolescents targeted in this
study in light of demographic, social and cultural underpinnings.

4) The authors need to provide specific recommendations to address the barriers and facilitators found in the target populations (independently of the generalizability of the results).

**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 don't have any competing interests to declare.