Reviewer’s report

Title: Less healthy breakfast cereals are promoted more frequently in large supermarket chains in Canada

Version: 1  Date: 10 Mar 2017

Reviewer: David R Just

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript examines the relative frequency of healthy versus less healthy cereal marketing in a group of five grocery stores. While this study has some important limitations, the topic is of import and the analysis is useful. My primary concern with the manuscript is that it does not adjust for the base rate prevalence of the various cereals. While the less healthy cereals are marketed more frequently, there are also many more less healthy cereals in the store. From this it is unclear whether the higher frequency is just a result of randomly selecting cereals to promote, or a systematic bias toward promoting less healthy cereals. I believe this would be a much more useful result. My other concerns are more minor. I believe the limitations section muddles the generalizability of the result by first stating "results are generalizable to these two provinces" and later stating that the convenience sample limits the generalizability. You need to bring these two statements closer together in the text, and reconcile them for the reader. The reader should be given an accurate understanding of these tradeoffs and what questions they leave open. Finally, it is unclear how you handle differences in store size for statistical tests. It appears you are using simple means tests. It would make sense to account for the fact that larger stores may have more facings available than smaller stores when testing for differences in frequencies. Otherwise, store base rates in larger stores may drive the results.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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