Reviewer’s report

Title: Availability of healthier vs. less healthy food and food choice: An online experiment

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Reviewer: Margaret Allman-Farinelli

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written paper although one really has to concentrate when your discuss healthy versus less healthy to avoid confusion.

There seem to have been obstacles during the conduct of the study with recruitment and recalculation of sample sizes. I am hoping the person responsible for final analysis did not make the call on when to stop data collection.

I understand the basis for selection of healthy and less healthy items was essentially the caloric count. Was this visible to the participants on the food packaging. The most obvious difference to me is the size of the products ie the less healthy are double the size. I do not think the healthy snacks are actually that. They are just smaller gram weight and less calories. This is somewhat of an aside but it would be interesting to see what happened with really healthy foods like small bag of nuts, low fat cheese spread and crackers, packaged apple slices etc. ie judging food by nutritional quality - junk food is still junk food even if a smaller package with some fat removed!

The population seems quite educated i.e 46.7% is this typical in the UK now. Household income is well distributed I note. Would education be more important than income in food choice.

The results have real implications for practice and policy and a replication in the real world an excellent next step.

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?
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Yes
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I am able to assess the statistics

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