**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Effect of Calories-Only vs Physical Activity Calorie Expenditure Labeling on Lunch Calories Purchased in Worksite Cafeterias

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 07 Nov 2018

**Reviewer:** Charoula Nikolaou

**Reviewer's report:**

Dear Authors,

Many thanks for preparing this very interesting manuscript on the effect of labels showing calories translated into physical activity vs calorie labels alone on the calories of meals purchased.

Please, find below a few suggestions/comments on the manuscript.

Background:

Lines 28-33. The reviews you are referring to for showing that calorie labelling is not effective are dated. The first one was published before the legislation took an effect and the second was published the following year. There are more recent reviews on the topic. Please include more recent reviews.

I think the rationale that translating calories into exercise time is more intuitive needs a bit more explaining. We know that people tend to find complex nutrition information confusing so how showing more information on a label is better and more intuitive compared to just showing the number of calories?

You may find this review on the use of food labels useful.

Methods:

Line 38: What is your definition of 'regular' eating at work? I can see in the participant eligibility that you mention 3 times per week. I think you need to give more details if your 'regular' definition is 3 times per week in a 7-day week or a 5-day week.

Could you explain a little the format of your labelling? Size, colour, shape, positioning.

Did you label each meal component? Were the serving sizes standarised?

Did you analyse the recipes or the business provided you with the calorie information?

Results:

How many eligible participants were approached to participate to the study?

What was the range of calories in the meals provided in the cafeteria?

Did participants shift the type of food they chose? Maybe they reduced the calorie content a little but they shifted to other types of food.

Could you include the results of those who did not complete the intervention? You say in your methods that there were differences between those who completed and did not complete the study.

Discussion

I think you need to include more information in the methods about the formatting of your labels and position and then discuss the effect that formatting might have on the use. I have a study published on the effect prominent calorie labels on sales, but I am sure there are other studies out there on this topic.


Also, there is research showing that those who are already obese are not keen to use calorie-labelling. Could it be because your sample was obese that they didn't use the PACE labels? Again, in the study below, we found that bigger customers did not use the calorie-labels as much as those with normal weight.

Not sure if your sample can allow you a separate analysis by BMI categories (underweight, normal, overweight/obese). That analysis might help to shed more light to your data. How about gender? Was there any difference between men and women participants? You could discuss the effect of gender on the use of labels. Men (especially younger) may be more interested in building muscle and a strong body.

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

No

**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.

Yes

**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:

Acceptable

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