Reviewers 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: Sai Krupa Das

Reviewers report:

The authors examine the effect of calorie labeling and physical activity calorie expenditure (PACE) on restaurant menus on the point-of-decision food purchasing and lunchtime calories purchased. Menu labeling impact is an important public health question and one that the authors address in this well conducted study. The research is well presented, the methods are adequately explained, and the results and interpretation of findings are supported by the data.

Please find below some suggestions that may add value to the reader and this manuscript.

1) Please provide the rationale for the 2:1 randomization and allocation of cafeterias to the calorie labels vs. PACE labels?

2) Was there an exit survey that was collected to help understand how these labels were perceived by the employees - did they just pick their usual choices or did they read the label but did not factor the posts and stated values in their decision making? - Any notes that would inform additional strategies for intervention would be great.

3) Was the software used to calculate consumption calories at baseline and for change the same version? I ask because of the approximately 40 kcal reduction in both groups and want to ensure that this was not due to an artifact.

4) Page 11: I don't think that the consistent labeling of PACE and calorie labels - by increasing the size and prominence of the calorie labels is a potential source for mitigating the lack of difference - in-fact if there were inconsistencies then this would have confounded the data and interpretation.

5) I highly encourage you to add the physical activity data in this manuscript rather than in a subsequent separate manuscript- if there was cognitive processing of the PACE caloric equivalents of the purchased foods that indeed translated to physical activity behavior change, i.e. adding a mile walk, or 30 minutes on a treadmill - this would be valuable information that could alter the messaging and the impact of your findings.
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.

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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