Reviewer's report

Title: Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial Testing the Influence of Front-Of-Pack Sugar Warning Labels on Food Demand

Version: 0 Date: 13 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Miranda Blake

Reviewer's report:

I congratulate the authors on a policy-relevant, well conducted and well reported study. I have no serious concerns but have made suggestions below, which are designed to increase clarity in a few sections.

Background

Lines 53-54. Could you provide a little extra detail on the HCS. When was it introduced? Is it mandatory?

Line 69. Briefly, what to these cited studies show? Are the labels effective at changing health behaviours?

Line 75. Consider throughout the terminology and abbreviation "Health Warning label with deterring text". You abbreviation "WL" is not clearly a text-based label. Could you change it to something else like "Text based health warning label" or "Text warning label"? and then your abbreviation could be TW or similar.

Line 81. Should the hypothesis refer to "predicted purchases" or similar? So it could be "we hypothesized that the proportion of labelled products purchased would be largest in the control group…" Also check tenses here.

Methods

Line 103-4 and throughout. In this study it seems you based warning label eligibility on total sugar of product, and measured total sugar purchased as an outcome. Please provide justification for examining total sugar rather than added sugar, and discuss the implications.

Line 117. Please cite your prior studies

Line 123. Can you give an equivalent budget in USD for the international audience?
Results

Given your sample size, one decimal place should be sufficient for results throughout the text and in Table 1.

Table 1. In column 1 you don't need the units. You could update description of units in columns 2 to 4 from "mean or %" to "Mean (SD) or %".

Line 169 Please list secondary outcomes again for clarity.

Line 170-1. From table 3 it is clear these are only beverage purchases but here it sounds like any purchase that included a beverage.

Table 2 and 3. Could you give a more descriptive title for these tables?

Figure 3. Please clarify add the eligibility criteria "have experienced grocery shopping for their families before" to main methods section. Also, was this ever shopped for their families or recently shopped?

Suggest changed wording in analysis box "Did not take exercise seriously" to "Did not provide valid responses." Please add to main text methods how you determined whether responses were valid and what you did with invalid responses.

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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If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I have non-financial competing interests in that I also do research into choice experiments and sugar labelling.

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