Reviewer’s report

Title: Social disparities in food preparation behaviours: a DEDIPAC study

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Reviewer: Jayne Hutchinson

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript of a cross-section French study is well written, with very good use of English. It covers a wide range of food preparation behaviours and their independent associations with income, education and occupation. I was pleased to see the authors used the Bonferroni correction (to p <0.001) because of the large amount of multiple testing undertaken. Although I had no major issues with it, there are some areas that need additional attention, the main one I am concerned about relates to clarification around time spent preparing food:

Abstract:

Please make it clear in abstract that socio-economic (SEP) variables were mutually adjusted and were independently associated.

Line 57-58: Having a statement about cooking from scratch might be more important in the conclusion instead of the one about not wanting to cook more frequently, especially if we don't know whether the latter relates to women who already cook every day of the week.

Line 60: the statement, 'our findings do not show large socioeconomic disparities in food preparation behaviours' does not seem to tie up with the result section which does show socioeconomic disparities were found especially for women and some were large, although few differences were observed for men.

Introduction:

Lines 79-93: The argument about using the 3 SEP variables (income, education and occupation) together in the current study and the references to previous research needs to be constructed a little better, more clearly to convince the reader that this approach is needed. In the first sentence of this, I think it might be better to use of the word 'consistent evidence' instead of 'clear evidence' on line 80 when referring to previous research in the area. Then perhaps you could go on to say the inconsistent evidence might be due to inconsistencies in adjusting for other related socio-economic variables. Adjusting for the other variables, i.e. out of income, education and occupation, may mask or attenuate significant associations that may have been found in the
unadjusted analyses of these variables, especially if sample size is relatively small. Although the three variables will be moderately related to one another, as Turrel et al (2002) mention/suggest "education, occupation and income are conceptually distinct, and their influence is transmitted by different social processes".

Results:

Line 232 and notes to table 3, 4 and 5: 'whether or not' rather than 'to be or not' seems more suitable.

Line 270-275: need to state that these results are in comparison to regular cooks.

Line 321: Although no associations between SPS and cooking skills were found in the mutually adjusted analyses, were there any associations between cooking skills and any of the 3 SEP in the unadjusted analyses? If there were then perhaps using the 3 SEP variables together might be over-adjusting, because the 3 variables will be moderately related to one another. This might need mentioning in the discussion.

I suggest you make it clearer in the text of results that SEP were independently associated after mutual adjustment for the others two SEP variables used.

Table 3: clarify what the p values relate to in the table.

Table 4: a '1' in the middle of the table need deleting.

It would be useful to know whether there were any significant differences in the frequency of meal preparation by the socio-economic variables (i.e. number of meals prepared in a week) - is there evidence from the dataset that women of lower education, income and/or occupation cook more often than women of higher SEP. Also, is not wanting to cook more frequently and being from a lower SEP due to the fact they are already cooking every day of the week? e.g. does the association between not wanting to cook more frequently and being from a lower SEP remain after adjusting for total time spent preparing meals?

Discussion:

Lines 315, 330, 337, 341, 348, 387: please make it clear when you mention time spent preparing meals whether this is based on overall time (e.g. min/day equal to total time spent in meal preparation in a week divided by 7) or whether it refers to average time per day on the days they actually spent cooking or time spent per meal. It would be useful to make this clearer to the reader in relation to the current research and other research mentioned. Women from lower SEP were reported in the current research to cook less from scratch but spend more time preparing
food - this could be confusing if the reader misinterpreted it as time spent on each meal on average, since cooking from scratch is likely to take longer than not. Less time cooking by women of higher SEP may reflect sharing of cooking responsibilities within the household over a week, rather than less time spent on each meal they cook.

As stated in your conclusion the findings suggest that interventions promoting more investment for meal preparation in low SEP women, without talking time scarcity and strain into account, may not be effective. Moreover, I think it would be useful and appropriate in the discussion to suggest that interventions to improve men's willingness to cook, and to improve their cooking confidence and cooking skills might be more useful instead. As Adams et al (2015) point out, despite the majority of women sharing working responsibilities within couples, a considerably higher proportion of women than men are still responsible for food preparation in the UK and not surprisingly, men report being less confident at cooking than women. There is evidence that men on Jamie Oliver's Ministry of Food course reported significantly greater increases in cooking confidence than women after the course. This could be referenced: Hutchinson J, Watt JF, Strachan EK, Cade JE. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Ministry of Food cooking programme on self-reported food consumption and confidence with cooking. Public Health Nutrition. 2016: Dec:1-11.

Line 362: reword to 'used slightly less' rather than 'slightly used less'.

Line 420-422: I suggest the statement about Web-based design inducing mis-reporting be replaced by something along the lines of 'Self-reporting may induce misreporting due to social desirability bias'. In fact web-based questions may result in less social desirability bias than face to face interviews - there is evidence that individuals are more honest on self-completed questionnaires about health behaviours than in face to face interviews: Tipping, S., Hope, S., Pickering, K., Erens, B., Roth, M. A., & Mindell, J. S. (2010). The effect of mode and context on survey results: Analysis of data from the Health Survey for England 2006 and the Boost Survey for London. BMC Medical Research methodology, 10(1), 1-8. http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-10-84.

Line 446: use 'constraint' instead of strain?

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An article of importance in its field

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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