Author’s response to reviews

Title: Socioeconomic and ethnic differences in the relation between dietary costs and dietary quality: The HELIUS Study

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Prof. C. Collins & Dr. S. Kirkpatrick
Editors-in-Chief
Nutrition Journal

Concerning: Re-submission of an Original Article
Dear Prof. C. Collins & Dr. S. Kirkpatrick,

Thank you for the opportunity to revise and resubmit our manuscript “Socioeconomic and Ethnic Differences in the Relation between Dietary Costs and Dietary Quality: The HELIUS study” to the Nutrition Journal.

Our point-to-point response to the reviewers is copied below. Changes in the manuscript are highlighted in yellow.

We hope that our manuscript is now suitable for publication in the Nutrition Journal.

Yours Sincerely,

Joreintje D. Mackenbach (On behalf of the co-authors)

Reviewer reports:

Reviewer #1: This is a well written and relevant research. The findings are very useful and could inform the design and components of public health initiatives especially those targeted at reducing inequalities in health.

>> We would like to thank the reviewer for their positive feedback.

See below for some minor queries:

Line 92 The sample included Ghanaians but results and analysis used Africans. Can the authors clarify what they mean by Africans?

>> We would like to clarify that the analysis was not conducted among ‘Africans’, but among adults of ‘African Surinamese’ origin, as self-reported by the participants. In line 92, we describe the five main ethnic groups the HELIUS study focused on. The Ghanaian subgroup described in this sentence did not participate in the substudy focused on dietary patterns. The Surinamese subgroup described in this sentence includes adults of South Asian Surinamese origin and African Surinamese origin. We have clarified the description of the ethnic subgroups as follows:

Line 91-100: “Baseline data collection took place in 2011-2015 among nearly 25,000 participants (aged 18-70 years) of Dutch, Surinamese, Turkish, Moroccan and Ghanaian origin people. Data were collected by questionnaires and a physical examination. The study protocols were approved by the Ethical Review Board of the Amsterdam Medical Center, and all participants provided written informed consent.”
The current study is a sub-sample of Dutch, Surinamese, Turkish and Moroccan participants who agreed to also take part in the HELIUS-dietary patterns sub-study and included 5358 participants[20]. Participants with other/unknown ethnic origin (n=11) or ‘other’ Surinamese origin (n=148) (see definition ethnicity below), individuals with extreme energy values (<500 or >3500 for women and <800 or >4000 for men[21]; n=318) and individuals with missing values on covariates (n=164) were excluded, resulting in an analytical sample of n=4717.”

Line 150-152: “After data collection, participants of Surinamese ethnic origin were further classified according to self-reported ethnic origin (obtained by questionnaire) into ‘African Surinamese’, ‘South-Asian Surinamese’ or ‘other’.”

Line 94 The reference for the ethics approval could be provided here as evidence. The full name of the ethics committee instead AMC (if this is an abbreviation) would be useful to the reader.

>> We now provide the full name of the Amsterdam Medical Center Ethical Review Board in line 94:

“The study protocols were approved by the Ethical Review Board of the Amsterdam Medical Center, and all participants provided written informed consent.”

Reviewer #2: Study entitled "Socioeconomic and Ethnic Differences in the Relation between Dietary Costs and Dietary Quality: The HELIUS Study" is a well-designed study explaining the associations between education status, dietary quality and dietary costs among different ethnic groups living in Netherlands.

>> We would like to thank the reviewer for their positive feedback.

As a minor revision, I would ask the authors to explain in Figure 1, what "lower diet costs" "medium diet costs" and "higher diet costs" mean in terms of euros, so that the readers can understand the dietary cost concept more clearly.

>> We have added the range of dietary costs for each tertile (‘low’, ‘medium’ and ‘high’) to Figure 1.