Reviewer’s report

Title: A cross-sectional study of the associations between the traditional Japanese diet and nutrient intakes: The NILS-LSA project

Version: 0 Date: 09 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Inkyung Baik

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript has presented data on the associations among several dietary indices in a cross-sectional study. The topic of the manuscript is proper for the Nutrition Journal, but it seems to be a local interest. So, the generalizability of the study is too limited.

The authors may need to consider the following comments to improve the manuscript.

1) Title: Please change or specify the term of 'the Japanese diet', which cannot be representative for all dietary patterns in Japanese people. The Japanese diet indices were developed in a sample including adults living in a limited location during a certain period of time.

2) Line 72: 'the Japanese diet' may mean 'a traditional Japanese diet'. Please specify the diet.

3) Lines 77-86: More information regarding the JDI, the association between the JDI and dietary quality or nutrient intake, and some limitations in previous studies related to the JDI is needed for reviewers and readers.

4) In Method: The study population is 2221 male and female Japanese adults aged 40 years or over who were residents of a local area and members of the NILS-LSA. Their dietary data collected between 2006 and 2008 were used for this study to calculate several types of JDI and a nutrient density score. The data seem to be too old and partial to define 'the Japanese diet'.

5) In Method: An external validity study was conducted in the same population using data collected in a different period of time. It is necessary to validate the indices using an external sample.

6) The term of 'nutrient density' is used to indicate the sum of amount of certain nutrients per serving (or weight or calorie). It seems that the authors used their own definition. Please provide proper references or explanations regarding this issue.
7) The nutrient density score is calculated as the sum of nutrient density values for 9 nutrients. A person, who consumed 2-fold amounts of DRI for iron and protein and half amounts of vitamins, and another person, who consumed DRI for iron, protein, and vitamins, would have same scores. Because "beef and pork" are non-adhering components in the JDI, there must be discrepancies in the nutrient density score and the JDI.

8) The JDIs need to be evaluated with a gold standard method. Because the nutrient density score is another dietary index, the findings on the associations among these dietary indices are likely to depend on the study population.

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