Author’s response to reviews

Title: Association between diet quality and food waste in Canadian families: a cross-sectional study

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Dr. Lassale, Guest Editor for Nutrition Journal
Special Issue: “Food, Health, and Environmental Sustainability”

Re: Article “Association between diet quality and food waste in Canadian families: a cross-sectional study” (NUTJ-D-20-00057R1)

Dear Dr. Lassale,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to address the reviewers’ comments and resubmit the above-referenced manuscript for consideration of publication in Nutrition Journal in the special issue entitled: “Food, Health, and Environmental Sustainability”.


We have made the minor revisions based on suggestions from the reviewers, which we hope will make this paper suitable for publication. Below, we address each of the comments and have highlighted all associated changes in yellow in the attached manuscript.

All authors have reviewed and approved the revised manuscript. The authors have no conflicts of interest to report. This manuscript has not been accepted or published previously and is not under review for publication elsewhere. Jess Haines is the corresponding author for the paper. Please do not hesitate to contact her with any questions at jhaines@uoguelph.ca.

We appreciate your continued interest in this manuscript and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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Thank you to the reviewers for their thoughtful comments and feedback. We have provided our responses to each comment below and have made the minor revisions to the manuscript.

Reviewer Reports:

Reviewer #1: I would like to thank the authors for the answers. They have addressed adequately my questions, and I think, the other reviewer's questions. Nevertheless, I have to two further comments to formulate.

Like the other reviewer, I questioned the absence of adjustment on energy intake. I previously mentioned that the HEI-2015 is known to be poorly correlated with energy intake and the authors confirmed that the HEI-2015 takes into account by construction the fact that higher energy intake could be a confounding factor with higher diet quality score. My concern was about being able to distinguish between the waste due to the quality of the diet (with the new hypothesis formulated by the authors like higher diet quality could lead to more unavoidable waste) and the waste due to the energy intake and/or need (with the assumption that the higher the energy intake, the higher the food intake and thus the higher the food waste).

Response: We agree with your comments and understand how energy intake could be a confounding factor. In fact, these concerns related to how higher energy intake could be associated with higher diet quality (or level of food waste) is exact reason that HEI is adjusted for energy intake. Since the HEI-2015 calculations adjust for energy intake, additional adjustment of energy is not required in our models.
About the contribution of eating away from home, could the authors provide some information from the literature to help the reader to appreciate how important eating away from home could be, and thus affect the results? For example, I found a brief infographic about this phenomenon… https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/11-627-M2019003

Response: We agree it is important to continue this discussion, especially as it pertains to the lower HEI-2015 scores. We’ve added the following lines 325-329:

“On the other hand, parents who have lower HEI-2015 scores, might be more reliant on such convenience foods, thus resulting in less food waste being generated. Considering most Canadians eat out or purchase takeout food on a regular basis [17], it is an important habit to consider in relation to household food waste.”

Reviewer #2: The authors have answered satisfactorily to my comments and the manuscript has improved in quality.

Response: Thank you for taking the time to review the manuscript.