Reviewer’s report

Title: Cultural differences in food and shape related attitudes and eating behavior are associated with differences of Body Mass Index in the same food environment: A cross-sectional study of Kiribati and European seafarers on merchant ships. Results from the Seafarer Nutrition Study.

Version: 0 Date: 16 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Dayna Lee-Baggley

Reviewer’s report:

The present study examined differences in BMI and their association with weight, shape and nutrition related attitudes and perceptions using data from The Seafarer Nutrition Study. This allowed comparisons between 48 Kiribati and 33 European male seafarers from 4 commercial merchant ships. Results examined differences between the groups in weight, self-evaluation and the impact of availability of westernized food environment. The authors consider the ways in which traditional cultures may impact these findings.

The authors provide an interesting report on cultural differences and the impact of exposure to western ideals on weight, self-perception, and eating behaviours.

There were no page numbers on the document. I have based the page numbers on the pdf count of pages from the submission. Please ensure subsequent versions include page numbers.

Major concerns

Page 8, line 19. The authors describe using content analytic approach in order to analyze the responses. However, I do not feel they provided enough detail on their qualitative analysis. There is no information on how the categories or themes were developed. The authors should be more explicit on how they created the categories. Some quotes from participants is also typical in qualitative results.

Page 12, line 23. I would encourage the authors to describe how the social environment on the vessel may be similar or different than the traditional culture at home for the Kiribati. This may also impact their eating habits and weight perceptions.

Conclusion. Although it is an interesting study, the authors offer little in terms of why this may be important for our understanding beyond seafarers. Does this provide any insight into how the spread of western diets may be impacting the health of those from traditional cultures? I think the authors could do more to offer the study as a lens into the larger problematic issue of western influence in obesity from a globalization perspective.

Minor concerns.
Page 5, line 13: this is the first time in the manuscript Kiribati is mentioned, please add "a Pacific Island Group" to provide context for those not familiar with this island.

Page 6, line 2-3, please comment on the contradictions described in Samoan's relationship to their weight.

Page 7, line 5, please describe when the structured interview took place (ie., during shore leave? When during the trip did this occur? Where were the interviews conducted?)

Page 10 line 2-3. Please comment on the difference between "desirable" and "respected". Is it clear that the participants understood the difference between these ideas?

Page 12, line 11. The authors would be best to either include data on the idea that "several expressed a wish for more fish" earlier in the paper or drop the distinction. It is confusing for it to show up in the discussion and then have no data or commentary on this.

Figure 4 and figure 5, please provide an alternative colour system. The colours used currently cannot be distinguished when printed or viewed in black and white. Dashes or dots may be needed to separate the groups.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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:

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