Author’s response to reviews

Title: Towards Personalised Molecular Feedback for Weight Loss

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Author’s response to reviews:

Zahra Bahadoran
BMC Obesity
January 3, 2018

Subject: Submission of revised paper "Towards Personalised Molecular Feedback for Weight Loss" (OBSY-D-18-00080)

Dear Dr. Bahadoran,

Thank you for assessing our revised manuscript and providing us with an opportunity to address the reviewers’ comments for potential publication in BMC Obesity. We have carefully addressed the comments and have revised the manuscript accordingly. Our responses are provided in a point-by-point manner below.

We would like to thank you and the reviewers for helping us improve the manuscript and hope the revised version is suitable for publication. We look forward to hearing from you.
Responses to reviewer 2

The authors have vastly improved the content of the manuscript in the revised version. There are a few minor typographical and language issues that could be sorted by some third party proofreading. Response 1. Thank you for your positive response to our manuscript. The manuscript has been proofread and corrected by a fluent English speaker and corrections have been made throughout the manuscript.

I would suggest removing "In summary" from line 143 on page 7. In the same paragraph, the last sentence could read "Since..." instead of "Because...". The authors have provided some detail under "Meal plans" on page 9, and I would suggest keeping this (very necessary) detail in one place that the authors feel helps with coherence and flow.

Response 2. The suggested edits have been made and the meal plans descriptions are provided in Meal Plans section (line 182).

Please add the BMI unit (kg/m^2) anywhere the BMI values and cut-off points are mentioned, as well as at least one decimal place, since it is a continuous quantity. The BMI cut-off points would then be normal between 18.5 and 24.9 kg/m^2, overweight from 25.0 to 29.9 kg/m^2, and obese for values 30.0 kg/m^2 and greater. (http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/a-healthy-lifestyle/body-mass-index-bmi)

Response 3. BMI units and at least one decimal place is now provided in line 155 (Page 7), 313 and 317 on Page 14.

The authors mention "control groups" in the "Statistical analysis" section (line 291, page 13) -- is this in reference to control days? I would suggest saying "values from control days" instead of "control group" if so.

Response 4. That is correct, the recommended edit has been made in line 280 (Page 12).

Since the participants provided their own weight, height and even BMI, could there be a chance for misclassification? I would suggest adding some discussion regarding the potential biases in the results owing to study design and data collection (recall, use of app, etc) when mentioning
limitations in the "Discussion" section. This would help readers appreciate the results in light of potential biases and make a case for further study of weight loss metabolites.

Response 5. The discussion has been updated to include this bias (line 492 page 21; line 502 page 22)

Again, I believe this is an exciting line of study in weight loss research, and I commend the authors for their endeavour.

Response 6: We would like to thank the reviewer for the positive support and these excellent suggestions which have resulted in a more complete manuscript.