Reviewer’s report

Title: “I love having a healthy lifestyle”. A qualitative study investigating body mass index trajectories from childhood to mid-adulthood

Version: 0 Date: 24 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Lisa Bailey-Davis

Reviewer’s report:

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The study design is described as "exploratory mixed methods," however only qualitative data collection is utilized to explore the implied guiding research question, "how does a social-ecological framework provide insight into individual, social, and environmental factors that may influence diverging weight trajectories across the life course?" The authors correctly note that qualitative data were used for the purposeful sampling plan. That alone does not provide data related to the implied research question. A mixed methods study would address a single research question using two or more methods to collect data, regardless of data type. This study used a purposeful sample and then collected qualitative data only to answer the implied research question and therefore is a qualitative study.

The second issue that I have with the design is related to the question and why work setting is explored as a space for potential meaning. This reader is not convinced in the background/introduction that work site is a compelling setting for investigation, nor does this seem to provide much utility in the results and discussion. The works by Powell and colleagues and Christalkis and colleagues related to social contagion theory may be useful for a worksite lens.

I find it odd and concerning that the moderator's guide is not provided in the manuscript.

The socio-ecological framework, rather than the data, seem to be driving your report of "emergent themes." For example, the reported themes focus on workplace social relationships; worksite environmental supports for activity, food, and alcohol; and individual factors like professional training, job type, stress. These themes reflect the framework and are not necessarily being driven by the data. Most concerning is the title, "Health Identity," which I would have expected to be better flushed out and described as a major theme if this is to be defended as the primary finding from the exploratory study.

There is considerable debate in qualitative research regarding the degree to which a positivist lens should be employed when describing results. In the case of this manuscript, the tendency to report findings using this lens is strong.
Is the finding that persons with an orientation to health and healthy lifestyles are drawn to health professions truly novel?

**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.

No

**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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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