Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessing nutrition and other claims on food labels: A repeated cross-sectional analysis of the Canadian food supply

Version: 1 Date: 16 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Kerry Brown

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for taking the time to revise this manuscript. It is much appreciated.

Minor comments below:

1) Thank you for your efforts to clarify the purpose of the paper. Could I please ask you to go through the paper one last time and ensure that the overall aim and objectives/specific research questions are consistent. For example the abstract states the aims of the paper as i) overall prevalence, ii) types of claims, and iii) change 2010-2013. It was particularly pleasing to see the abstract results presented in this same order. Yet, at the end of the introduction the overall aim is the trend 2010-2013 with specific RQs i) types of claims, ii) food categories, iii) change 2010-2013. This is a minor point, but I do think it is worth spending a little more time reflecting upon the best way to present what you have done. At the very least any inconsistencies can cause confusion and a seed of doubt in the reader's mind, so I would advise the author or editor thoroughly read through the manuscript from top to bottom to ensure the aims, objectives and conclusions are consist.

2) I appreciate this could be time consuming but I do agree with reviewer 3. If possible, please include the raw 2010 data alongside that of 2013 in your tables. It could also be a neat way to put the chi square statistics and significance levels in the table. This would greatly strengthen your arguments and allow the reader to interpret whether the non-significant differences/trends in proportions between 2010 and 2013 are meaningful e.g., by being able to see that 10% might refer to 10 products out of 100 products sampled.

3) I like the additions in the discussion which acknowledge differences in how claims are categorised in different regions and what is meant by a front of pack claim - to a lay person this would be anything written on the front of the packet, not necessarily a colour/% reference intake labelling scheme. I wonder if it would be wise to bring these comments further forward in the manuscript to make it obvious in the methods section (line 158-183) what claims you have categorised/sampled. Can you please also clarify if the sampling/reporting of function claims has been removed from this manuscript (line 281) and if so, perhaps add a sentence to acknowledge that is was sampled but the data has not been analysed in the current paper?

4) Thank you for adding the reference to the schedule M. A small suggestion, might be to consider referring to the 'schedule M food categories', so it is clear what the schedule is/achieves.
In addition, to consistently refer using Health Canada schedule M or FDR schedule M rather than alternating between the two.

5) I am still a little unclear as to the in/exclusion criteria and data collection procedure for FLIP. I would consider referring to the relevant publication for details on FLIP but including in the current manuscript key information, such as was data collected in more than one Canadian province (would stores in BC have different products to those of Ontario?), whether baby foods were also excluded from sampling alongside herbal remedies and supplements. Plus perhaps a sentence to explain that data was collected by entering each type of store and taking photos of each product, as this would come as rather a surprise in the strengths/limitations section if one had not read previous FLIP documentation).

6) Claims can be multi-purpose. Your additions to refer to marketing could be phrased in a way to strengthen the need for your current paper: monitoring and surveillance of claims can help with assessing regulation compliance/fit regulations are fit for purpose to ensure fair competition between retailers, encourage trade across regional boundaries, protect public from misleading information, as dietary interventions etc.

7) Thank you for further reflecting upon your findings. Please do review your discussion once more to ensure repetition is limited and that you have a strong final paragraph to lead into your conclusion. The conclusion is also greatly improved and could yet be further improved with some minor editing.

Editorial issues:

1) Thorough grammar and English check e.g., consider revising line 59 'very often', 2 x consistency in lines 196-198 etc.

2) Introduction final paragraph could be condensed and revised - currently repetitive e.g., perhaps line 117 'the aim of this paper is to investigate the use of nutrition...'

3) Consider if the use of 'substantially' in line 360 is justified.

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

Yes

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

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If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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