Reviewer’s report

Title: Identifying perceived barriers and enablers of healthy eating in college students in Hawai'i: a qualitative study using focus groups

Version: 0 Date: 27 Jul 2018

Reviewer: Jane M. Kolodinsky

Reviewer's report:

The purpose of this paper is an important one---college age eaters (and younger) become the consumers of tomorrow, and knowing their triggers and barriers is important.

Having a theoretical grounding (social-ecological model) is important. You could describe this in a bit more detail--perhaps a paragraph as I am not sure it has been used in the context of your paper before, making your study a nice addition to the literature.

The major limitations of your paper are in the methods. How were subjects recruited? These appear to be mostly healthy weight students. This was surprising for me given the profile of weight in HI. With no additional details, the reader can "make up their own story," such that I did--are these students participating because they are interested in health eating? Would this bias the results? There are so many qualifying questions. You must clearly identify how you recruited. In a "fully funded" focus group study one would typically recruit widely, group respondents into similar groups, make sure you do not have too many groups that are "like," and collect data until no new information is collected.

It also appears you had only one person develop the code book and do the coding. This is highly unusual, and I understand it is difficult to go backwards. However, you need to go back and have a second "developer" and at least a second coder who codes a subset/sample to check for inter coder reliability.

From the presentation, it seems that all comments are "equal." You give one example for each of your codes. Even in a qualitative paper, there is a numerical aspect. It also seems as if you have a lot of data from only 44 respondents.

Given you haven't fully explained your methods or the results, it is difficult to believe the conclusions.

All these things aside, there are ways to strengthen the paper, albeit it will be necessary to go backwards in the process.
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.  

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?  
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.  

Unable to assess

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:  

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests  
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?
6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

'I declare that I have no competing interests' below

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal