Reviewer’s report

Title: Mixed methods evaluation of an employer-led, free lunch initiative in Northern Ireland

Version: 0 Date: 11 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Courtney Barnes

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the manuscript. Please find my suggestions below:

Line 31: define what is meant by an unhealthy diet as there is no reference to the the nutrients you've assessed (i.e. saturated fat, added sugar, excess kilojoules)

Line 35: Introduce NI abbreviation here, as it's later used (line 58) without it first introduced in brackets

Line 41: First use of UK abbreviation.

Line 46: define what is meant by higher nutritional value

Line 59: When the primary outcome is introduced it reads as if change in fruit and veg combined is the outcome. Suggest separating the acronym. (F) and (V) instead as it is not reported as combined change in fruit and vegetables.

Line: Describe IS and CS abbreviations. First use (excluding abstract).

Line 61-62: Current confusion with number of secondary outcomes. Suggest editing to - and (5) acceptability of the lunches and the overall initiative post-intervention by employees from the IS.

Line 72-73: Suggest to further clarify setting of study. It is currently unclear if both sites are in NI (assumed), or if one site is a sister company worldwide.

Line 80-81: Provide a justification for why this exclusion criteria is in place

Line 92: Provide further description into the selection and provision of food items for the lunches. For example, was it solely selected by a catering staff member (i.e. just their opinion), was it assessed against any type of dietary guideline? This is not clear until the discussion when limitations are listed.

Line 138-139: Inconsistent use of abbreviations as well as intervention and control groups. Suggest selecting one for consistency

Line 151: Suggest adding results in text for changes to fruit and vegetables between groups as this has been reported as your primary outcome
Line 154: first use of calories in reference to energy. Also reported as kilojoules within the table. Suggest selecting one for consistency

Line 254: specify who has made the suggestions to management (e.g. stakeholders, employees, etc.)

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

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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