

Author's response to reviews

Title: Validity of claims made in weight management research: a narrative review of dietetic articles.

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over

Dear Editorial Team,

Thank you for considering my article "Validity of claims made in weight management research: a narrative review of dietetic articles."

I appreciate both the reviewers' comments and have responded to them as detailed below. I feel this strengthens my paper by adding clarity and fitting it for an international audience.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Lucy Aphramor

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions

At times, when reading the manuscript, I found it confusing as to where the author was referring – was it to articles that were i) part of the original review that identified 15 articles published in the Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics between January 2004 and December 2008 or ii) from cited articles found in one of the 15 review articles. It was easy enough to determine the answer by checking the references, and I don't have an easy way to suggest correcting this; nonetheless it might make it easier on the reader if there was a more graceful way to identify which level of article was being referred to.

I added a 'J' to articles that appeared in the Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics to identify them from other articles quoted.

Because this article is an on-line journal read by people from around the world, every effort should be made to identify acronyms, health centres and so on. Although these names may be commonplace in some parts of the world, they may not be for all readers. For example, on page 1, in the Background section, I am not clear which Centre for Disease Control is being referred to without referring to the references. I would suggest identifying which CDC is being referred to here.

done

I would like to see an introductory sentence for every section to transition the reader from one section easily to the next, such as is done on page 17 for Adverse Effects.

done

Methods, page 4: last paragraph. I think this paragraph could be explained better or expanded. Again, I find calling the articles cited in the review articles as 'citations' rather than cited articles, is unclear. Is this about English/Canadian

usage?
done

Results, page 4: Add an introductory sentence at the beginning of this section. Sentence one should include “intervention” by whom and for what.
done

Results, page 4: first paragraph, explain what Counterweight is in a footnote
Footnotes not permitted - explained in text.
Justification for treatment, Prevention of diabetes, page 6: Add an introductory sentence to this section.
done

Justification for treatment, Prevention of diabetes, page 6: delete the word ‘in’ in the last paragraph, where it says, “This finding is not further discussed in...”
done

Justification for treatment, overall benefit, page 7: I suggest an introductory sentence for the section.
done

Justification for treatment, overall benefit, page 7: middle of paragraph one, I suggest stating from which country is the National Obesity Forum, the UK?
done

Justification for treatment, overall benefit, page 9: last paragraph, the first citation only has a page number (491), but no article number, probably ‘3’.
corrected

Effectiveness , Use of energy deficit, page 10: Add an introductory sentence to this section.
done

Effectiveness , Use of energy deficit, page 12: the acronym, SIGN, should be footnoted for the international reader.
done

Effectiveness, scientific credibility, page 12: Add an introductory sentence to this section.
done

Effectiveness, scientific credibility, page 14: the acronym, RCT, should be written in full.
corrected

Effectiveness, scientific credibility, page 14: second sentence of second paragraph, typo found in the word, “trials” –“... a randomized controlled trials...”
corrected

- Discretionary Revisions

Background: I feel this section would benefit from some context-setting by the author, in particular for novice readers in this area of study. Perhaps one or two more paragraphs that summarize the discourse on the 'obesity debate' touching on concepts such as: morality, social inequality, fat bigotry/bias, personal vs. social bodies, epidemic psychology, economics and individual vs. systemic responsibility to name a few. However, I have placed this in the discretionary section, as I can't help wonder if the author didn't have a particular reason for not doing so.

I spent some time deciding whether to situate my research in the context of obesity ideologies, as suggested by the reviewer, and introduce the reader to perspectives from critical weight studies. In the end I decided to allow the scientific argument I make stand on its own merit by not including this discussion in the early part of the paper. I was concerned that by including critical perspectives there was a risk of the work not being seriously engaged with in case of suspected bias. However, in light of the reviewer's comments I have now added some reference to this debate in the final section, taking care not to add too much to an already lengthy paper. I have also added a section on health at every size which I noticed I referred to in the introduction but did not then later expand on.

Abstract, page 2: In the background section, it is widely reported where? That conventional weight management... altered

Abstract, page 2: in the results section, second sentence, I would put commas between 'agenda' and 'controversies' and between 'discussed' and 'and'. Whenever I suggest comma use, it is for ease of the reader with long sentences, and discretionary. done

Methods, page 3: I would suggest moving down the 2 sentences, "The journal was hand searched.....papers were published" to the end of that same paragraph. done

Results, page 5: middle of first paragraph, I would start a new paragraph with the sentence, "I will appraise the use of three of the papers cited" and I would add to that same sentence, cited where, from Counterweight?

Results, page 5: middle paragraph, I would delete the adjective 'ostensibly'.

Results, page 5: last sentence on page, I would reword to say, "can be discounted as it neglected to include any methodology".

Justification for treatment, Prevention of diabetes, page 6: second sentence, I would reword to read, "The authors of one heavily-relied on paper..."

Justification for treatment, Prevention of diabetes, page 6: middle of first paragraph, I would add a comma between the words 'lifestyle' and 'again'.

Justification for treatment, Prevention of diabetes, page 6, middle of first paragraph, I would shorten or make into more than one sentence, the very long sentence starting with, "A more detailed reading of the results..."

Justification for treatment, Prevention of diabetes, page 7: perhaps an explanation, citation or footnote for what Level 1 evidence is? And again on page

19 at the end of the Adverse Effects section.

Justification for treatment, overall benefit, page 7: middle of paragraph one, I suggest substituting the word, "above" for either 'earlier' or 'previously', as in "as demonstrated above".

Justification for treatment, overall benefit, page 7: paragraph two, are the numbers in the citation bracket correct? 17, 18, 19 and then 1? And to what does "It", the first word in the next sentence refer?

Justification for treatment, overall benefit, page 8: paragraph one, I would start a new paragraph with the sentence beginning, "First, the focus on weight loss..." And I find that same sentence very long, and suggest breaking it into smaller sentences.

Justification for treatment, overall benefit, page 8: paragraph one, last sentence, I would put a comma between the words 'analysis' and 'work' and I would delete the word, 'their' before scientific merit.

Justification for treatment, overall benefit, page 8: last paragraph, I would add a comma after the expression, 'in such cases,...'

Justification for treatment, overall benefit, page 9: middle of first paragraph, I would change the word 'and' to 'they' in the sentence starting with, "This ignores....and moreover they can be..."

Effectiveness , Use of energy deficit, page 11: I suggest substituting the word, "above" for either 'earlier' or 'previously', as in "the paper mentioned above".

Effectiveness , Use of energy deficit, page 11: I find the end of the sentence beginning, "In fact, Frost et al..." where it says, "except when a subgroup..." unclear as to the point the author is making.

Effectiveness , Use of energy deficit, page 12: last sentence of first part paragraph, the word 'to' missing in the sentence that says, "An odd, not TO say..."

Effectiveness, scientific credibility, page 13: middle of first paragraph, I would add a copy between 'exercise' and 'led'.

Effectiveness, scientific credibility, page 14: second paragraph, I found the sentence, "Authors note that adverse effects...applicability of their finding." to be an awkward sentence and suggest it be rewritten.

Effectiveness, scientific credibility, page 14 – 16: this is one very long paragraph and I suggest it is broken up into smaller paragraphs.

Effectiveness, scientific credibility, page 16: I would add a comma in the first sentence between the words, 'reviewed' and "Dyson".

Effectiveness, scientific credibility, page 16: middle of paragraph, should it say 'self-reported' weight, not 'self-report' weight?

Adverse Effects, page 18: I think it's just a missed line space, but I would start a new paragraph with the sentence beginning, "Authors of a second paper..." In this same sentence, I am not sure which report the author is referring to when she writes, "sample report findings". And later in the same paragraph, in Canada we would say, "flag' not 'flag up'.

Adverse Effects, page 19: I think it's just a missed line, but a new paragraph starting with the sentence, "There are other instances..."

Discussion, page 20: I would add a comma between the words, 'positions' and 'and' in the top paragraph.

All of the above suggestions responded to.

Reviewer 2:

Discretionary revision - ? should "a health at every size approach" (top of page 21) be in italics

Generally used without italics.