

Reviewer's report

Title: Psychosocial Correlates of Dietary Fat Intake in African American Adults: A cross-sectional study

Version: 3 **Date:** 9 March 2009

Reviewer: Steve Smith

Reviewer's report:

The paper by Watters and Satia explores, on a population level the factors that predispose African Americans to consume (or not) foods high in total and saturated fat. There has been substantial controversy surrounding the importance of dietary fat for the development of obesity, however the link between saturated fat and the development of atherosclerotic cardiovascular diseases and the links of total fat intake and cancer remains strong and evokes little controversy. In this light, the exploration of the factors leading to higher than average total and saturated fat in populations such as African Americans is an important step towards the development of population and practitioner based strategies to reduce total and saturated fat intake and reduce morbidity and mortality.

Watter and Satia extend our view of the upstream factors leading to total and saturated fat intakes by exploring the relative contribution of psychosocial vs. demographic factors using the PRECEDE framework. This framework, based on Predisposing, Reinforcing, and Enabling Constructs in Educational Diagnosis and Evaluation, allows for the examination of the psychosocial constructs of interest as a means to evaluate their association (and inferred causality / contribution) with health behaviors.

They show very nicely that psychosocial factors are more important than the demographic factors. This was especially apparent for an individual's belief that low-fat diets are important. This is important because it opens the door to a new strategy for intervention focusing specifically on changing this belief. Whether this approach will prove to be useful remains to be seen but provides a testable hypothesis. Along with emphasis on Reinforcing factors such as inter-individual support and Enabling factors such as information on the preparation of healthy foods it is possible that progress can be made.

Taken together, this new information provides a meliorating force to combat diseases from a public health perspective that are not improving as quickly as the science.

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Please number your comments and divide them into:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) none

Minor Essential Revisions

1) none

Discretionary Revisions

1. Discussion

a. Phrasing (pg. 12) : “This study examined self-reported psychosocial...”

b. The first paragraph might include a clear and unequivocal statement about the findings of the study such as: “...we found that psychosocial factors were more powerful predictors of total and saturated fat intake than demographic factors.” And “The PRECEDE framework provides added value in identifying populations that should be targeted for additional intervention... Or something along these lines.

2. Table 2

a. For the enabling factor “afford to purchase healthy foods”; one would think that this would match up with the education (Table 2). A short comment about the internal validity of this measure and its relationship to level of formal education would be appreciated.

Given your assessment of the manuscript, what do you advise should be the next step?

Accept without revision

Level of interest

This is an article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English

Acceptable

Statistical review

No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests

'I declare that I have no competing interests'

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests