

Reviewer's report

Title: Nutrient adequacy during weight loss interventions: a randomized study in women comparing the dietary intake in a meal replacement group with a traditional food group

Version: 1 **Date:** 29 January 2007

Reviewer: Jamy D Ard

Reviewer's report:

General

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Abstract

The background of the abstract could be shortened considerably to allow for more detail in the methods. It would be important to know the caloric goals and macronutrient balance of the two interventions. There should also be some additional details in the methods regarding the time points for data collection and some description of the data collection process.

The authors should clarify that "(50:19:31, TFG vs 55:16:29, MRG)" pertains to carbohydrate: protein: fat. The results presented as "(4.0 ± 2.2 (+38%), TFG vs 4.6 ± 3.2 (+35%), MRG)" are somewhat cumbersome. It would be better to remove the % change.

Methods

P7, Statistical analysis: the discussion of the estimated average requirements should be moved into the statistical analysis section.

There is no mention of the use of dietary supplements prior to or during the intervention. This is most obviously related to the measured serum levels of vitamins and homocysteine levels. If this information was not collected, it should be discussed as a limitation.

Results

P9, paragraph 2: the authors state that the protocol called for those who reached a weight maintenance goal to increase their intake by 100 kcal/week while monitoring for weight changes. How many of the study participants reached this point in the protocol? Were all individuals who completed the 1 year assessment still calorie restricting? If some people were at a weight maintenance stage, this statement would likely be incorrect "However, neither group reached the targeted reduced energy intake goal of 5400 kJ/day (1200 kcal/day) in this weight loss intervention."

Tables

Tables 3 and 4 should be combined. The reader should be able to gather the value of the data (i.e., was the TFG higher or lower than the MRG for each variable) by simply looking at one table alone. The column providing the DRI is not necessary in my opinion.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Introduction

P3, paragraph 1: Counseling is misspelled

Methods

P6, paragraph 1: how many calories did the MR bars contain?

Table 6 could be removed as this data is presented in the text.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Table 5- is there any reason that potassium was not included in the EAR table?

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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