

Reviewer's report

Title: Efficacy of a Meal Replacement Diet Plan Compared to a Food-based Diet Plan after a Period of Weight Loss and Weight Maintenance: A Randomized Controlled Trial

Version: 1 **Date:** 26 November 2009

Reviewer: James Rohrer

Reviewer's report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. This is a very interesting paper that adds to a growing body of knowledge supporting meal replacements. However, the report left the following questions unanswered in my mind.

a. Why did all of the people who attended the first meeting complete the study? Some drop outs would be expected. Please explain. If some dropped out, an intention-to-treat analysis should be presented.

b. What financial incentives faced the two groups? If food products were free to subjects, please so state. If the control group had to buy its own food, please so state. How might this difference affect adherence?

c. Can you present measures of fidelity (adherence to protocol)? I'm sure no one followed their diets perfectly.

d. What advice was provided on physical activity? Did both groups receive the same advice on PA.

e. Did the same RD counsel subjects in both groups? If not, how many were involved any how were they different? Could the results be biased by differences in RD enthusiasm?

- Minor Essential Revisions

None.

- Discretionary Revisions

None.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'