

Author's response to reviews

Title: Food Consumption Frequency and Perceived Stress and Depressive Symptoms among Students in Three European Countries

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Food Consumption Frequency and Perceived Stress and Depressive Symptoms among Students in Three European Countries

Rafael T Mikolajczyk, Walid El Ansari and Annette E Maxwell

**RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS' COMMENTS – 2ND REVISION
(responses in bold)**

Reviewer: Chunhong Liu

Reviewer's report:

The most of my points of my previous review were considered but it still have one aspect that need to be taken into consideration and need clarification.

The authors combined four kinds of food (Sweets/cookies/Snacks/Fast food) into one group, three kinds of food (fresh fruits, salads, cooked vegetables) into another group, whereas the rest is one item food. Coincidentally, the significant results just came from the two combined groups except meat. If no combined, like most other group, how is about the results?

We thank the reviewer and agree that building subscales could positively affect significance levels. To clarify this point, we now present in the manuscript further findings outlining the univariable results for the food groups. The results demonstrate that the relationships existed for the original variables. Furthermore, we have also added an explanation that combining the items was conducted in order to reduce the correlation resulting from nutrition patterns. We do not explicitly address the issue of nutrition patterns in this paper, therefore we do not provide more extensive justifications, but we conducted the analysis in a way to fully account for this aspect. The univariable results will further assist the reader with the assessment of the multivariable results. [PIs see new table 2 and the corresponding changes in methods and results sections p. 6 and p. 8]

Reviewer: Craig Hadley

Reviewer's report:

The author has responded adequately to all of my concerns. I look forward to seeing the article in print.

My only concern is the following section on pg7:

P7: This is not clear: "The subscales were created as mean scores, which is equivalent to assuming that students reporting consumption of two similar food groups do not reduce the amount of each of the foods and vice-versa where students who eat just one food group do not compensate by eating an increased amount. The two new subscales and the remaining food groups that were not incorporated in one of the subscales were tested for multicollinearity with respect to the outcome variables."

We rephrased the corresponding sentence and placed it now in the limitations section (p. 11).