

Author's response to reviews

Title:Food store owners' and managers' perspectives on the food environment:
An exploratory mixed-methods study

Authors:

Clarence C Gravlee (cgravlee@ufl.edu)
P. Qasimah Boston (abarakaq@aol.com)
M. Miaisha Mitchell (mmiaisha@aol.com)
Alan F Schultz (alan.schultz@ufl.edu)
Connie Betterley (cjbetterley@msn.com)

Version:3**Date:**25 June 2014

Author's response to reviews: see over

June 25, 2014

Dear Editors:

My colleagues and I are grateful for your efficient and thorough review of our manuscript, "Food store owners' and managers' perspectives on the food environment: An exploratory mixed-methods study." We appreciate the opportunity to revise and resubmit the manuscript and believe it is stronger because of the reviewers' constructive comments.

Here we would like to provide a point-by-point response to the reviewers' concerns, as requested.

Reviewer 1 (van Kleef)

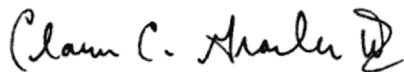
1. The reviewer suggested that the abstract could be revised to include more concrete findings. We have revised the results section of the abstract slightly so that it now identifies two key findings from the free-list questions and eight key themes from the open-ended, semistructured interviews. Space constraints do not allow us to provide further detail in the abstract.
2. The reviewer found the conclusions section of the abstract to be too vague. We agree with this criticism and have revised the abstract following the reviewers' suggestion. The abstract now gives specific examples of how our findings relate to multilevel, ecological models, including the reviewers' specific suggestion of highlighting the priority of making sales for store owners.
3. The reviewer saw the original second paragraph as too short and asked for more detail about what else had been found in previous research. We appreciate this point and made major revisions to address it. The revised introduction includes three new paragraphs that expand the literature review. We introduce the conceptual distinction between community and consumer food environments and situate our work as a contribution to understanding how the consumer food environment comes to be. We also provide additional detail about previous store-based interventions (see response to Reviewer 2).
4. The reviewer asked us to separate more clearly the results and discussion of free-list data. We understand the motivation for this criticism but respectfully disagree with it. Because free-listing is not a common method in public health (our search found no articles in *BMC Public Health* that have used the technique), we feel it is necessary to provide readers with some basic information about how to interpret the results. We do reserve full discussion of the implications, however, until the third paragraph of the Discussion.
5. Reviewer 1 expressed a preference for "smaller or less quotes of participants." We considered this point carefully but decided that it would detract from the paper to abbreviate the results. One of the reasons we selected *BMC Public Health*, in fact, was that the online format enables us to present more primary qualitative data than might be possible in a print journal (with accompanying page budgets). We feel it is important to present respondents' voices more fully to establish the evidentiary basis of our claims. This approach is also more consistent with the participatory approach that infuses our work.
6. The reviewer noted that the abbreviation "FL" was unclear and that we neglected to identify clearly the country in which the study took place. We appreciate this suggestion and replaced the abbreviation with "Florida (USA)."

Reviewer 2 (Odoms-Young)

1. Reviewer 2 observed that “the literature review seems inconsistent with the focus of the paper.” In particular, she suggested that the paper should be reframed to emphasize “the relevance of the study for developing food retail interventions.” We agree with this criticism and note that it is consistent with Reviewer 1’s criticism regarding the introduction. We have thoroughly revised the introduction with Reviewer 2’s suggestion in mind. Specifically, the third through fifth paragraphs situate our work in the context of store-based interventions to reshape the consumer food environment. We introduce the distinction between community and consumer food environments, summarize observational research on the consumer environment, and cite key results from existing store-based interventions. In the final paragraph of the introduction, we say directly: “This paper extends the evidence base for future food-store interventions....” We hope these changes satisfy the reviewer’s suggestions.
2. In a related point, the reviewer asked us to cite and describe the three intervention studies that included interviews with store owners or managers. We now do this in the fourth paragraph of the introduction.
3. Reviewer 2 asked for more detail about method for coding the qualitative data. We now explain that the first author alone did the primary coding and that other team members contributed to the interpretation and synthesis of results.
4. The reviewer suggested that we identify the community-based participatory research (CBPR) framework earlier in the paper. We have done so, moving this point to the first subsection of the methods section (Research Setting).
5. Reviewer 2 requested a citation regarding the accuracy of expanded field notes. To address this point, we clarified that all the excerpts presented in the results section are from verbatim transcripts of audio-recorded interviews (see first paragraph of section 2.4). We think the accuracy of the field notes, therefore, is not vital to evaluating the evidence we present here.

Again, we would like to express our thanks to the reviewers and editors for constructive feedback on our original manuscript. We appreciate your consideration of the enclosed revision for publication in *BMC Public Health*.

Sincerely,



Clarence C. Gravlee