

Author response #2005/178

Reviewer 1

1. How representative of the target or accessible population was the sample?

This sample was representative of the accessible population

2. The rationale for the order in which the instruments were administered should be noted. There was no specific rationale for the way the instruments were ordered. The demographic data sheet was first, followed by the dependent variable, the independent variable, and the mediators.

3. It is unclear why F ratios are reported for two of the three regression equations for each mediational model and a t reported for the third equation. The regression equations were reported this way based on a statistical consultation. The statistician said the t statistic is correct since it indicates that the mediator failed to fully explain the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. According to Baron and Kenny, the significant t statistic (reported in the manuscript) represents the failure of the mediator to adequately reduce the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

4. The discussion section does not fully address.....The reviewer asked whether optimism and perceived health status (the mediators) could perhaps act as moderators of the relation between social support and positive health practices. It is my understanding that when you have a statistically significant relationship between two variables, mediators should be investigated to help explain that relationship. Moderator variables should be investigated when there is an unexpected weak or inconsistent relationship between two variables. As presented in the manuscript, there was a positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables ($r = .41, p = .01$). The literature did not support the use of a path model.

5. On page 17, the author points out that.....According to Kenny (<http://davidakenny.net/cm/mediate.htm#>) multiple mediators can be run separately or simultaneously, but he also cautions that to run them together, the mediators should not be highly correlated. The two mediators in this study were highly correlated ($r = .57, p = .01$) and therefore two separate models were indicated.

Reviewer 2

1. The value of the optimism variable in the models was not sufficiently justified. The theory that links optimism to social support and optimism to positive health practices was addressed (page 7). A sentence was added (page 20, in blue) which I hope sufficiently addresses the importance of examining optimism in pregnant women.