

DAVE CHAMBERS

ACADEMICS who were criticised by “low carb, high fat” champion Tim Noakes for advocating a conventionally balanced diet have hit back.

Writing in the South African Medical Journal, the six researchers say they stand by their analysis and results. They also criticise the scientific methodology used by Noakes and

More fat in fire as researchers hit back at Noakes

British public health nutritionist Zoe Harcombe.

Noakes and Harcombe said they had found 14 errors in research at Stellenbosch University and UCT, published in the journal PLOS One.

They said the researchers did not abide by their own research criteria.

“When these 14 material errors

are corrected, the conclusion of the paper is reversed and the low-carb diet outperforms the high-carb diets for weight loss,” said Noakes.

But the researchers said Noakes and Harcombe had got it wrong except in one respect. And even when they adjusted their analysis to account for this, the outcome remained the same: a balanced

diet delivers the same results as a low-carbohydrate diet

In their letter to the medical journal, the researchers say criticisms by Noakes and Harcombe “show lack of understanding of current methods in evidence synthesis”.

“Our results show that the estimated average weight loss

after three to six months in overweight and obese non-diabetics in 13 individual trials ranged from a loss of 2.65kg-10.2kg in people randomised to low-carbohydrate diets, and 2.65kg-9.4kg with isoenergetic balanced diets.

“The average difference in weight loss between the dietary groups was 780g, a clinically unimportant difference, as was the average difference of 480g after one to two years.”