Author's response to reviews

Title: Cognitive Health among Older Adults in the United States and in England

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Author's response to reviews: see over
19 May 2009

Re: MS: 108805632514949 - Cognitive Health among Older Adults in the United States and in England

Dear Editor:

Thank you for provisionally accepting our manuscript, as outlined in your e-mail dated 19 May 2009. My co-authors and I have made the remaining revisions to the manuscript that you requested. We would be happy to make further revisions if you feel it necessary after reviewing this version of the manuscript.

Below, we describe the revisions that we made to the manuscript:

Editorial Requests

1. Both reviewers have pointed out that there are differences in response rates and the methods of interview (in person or telephone) between the two countries. This could be an explanation for the differences in the cognitive scores (a methodological artifact) or it could be real. This information is not provided in the abstract. It should be added to the methods section of the abstract and the abstract?s conclusion should be toned down e.g.

"Conclusions: Despite methodological differences between the two countries, US adults aged > 65 appeared to be cognitively healthier than English adults, even though they had a higher burden of cardiovascular risk factors and disease. Given the growing number of older adults worldwide, future cross-national studies aimed at identifying the medical and social factors that might prevent or delay cognitive decline in older adults would make important and valuable contributions to public health."

We added the following sentence to the Methods section of the abstract:

There were differences in the administration of the HRS and ELSA surveys, including use of both telephone and in-person administration of the HRS compared to only in-person administration of the ELSA, and a significantly higher response rate for the HRS (87% for the HRS vs. 67% for the ELSA).

We changed the conclusions section of the abstract to:

Despite methodological differences in the administration of the surveys in the two countries, US adults aged > 65 appeared to be cognitively healthier than English adults, even though they had a higher burden of cardiovascular risk factors and disease. Given the growing number of older adults worldwide, future cross-national studies aimed at identifying the medical and social factors that might prevent or delay cognitive decline in older adults would make important and valuable contributions to public health.

2. Please revise figure 1 - it does appear in our version of the manuscript? Please revise so that it is clear.

Figure 1 was uploaded again at the BMC website according to the submission directions. During the first submission of Figure 1, there were technical difficulties that were addressed by Judith Gorton (Editorial Administrator) on 7 May 2009. Please contact me if any problems remain with the clarity of Figure 1.
In addition to making the above changes, we have gone through the manuscript formatting checklist and we believe that the manuscript conforms to the BMC formatting guidelines.

Thank you again for provisionally accepting our manuscript. Please contact me if I can provide any additional information that would be helpful for finalizing the acceptance of the manuscript.

Sincerely,

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