Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of smoking during pregnancy and associated risk factors among Canadian women: A national survey

Authors:

Ban Al-Sahab (bsahab@yorku.ca)
Masarat Saqib (masarat@yorku.ca)
Gabriel Hauser (ghauser@yorku.ca)
Hala Tamim (htamim@yorku.ca)

Version: 4 Date: 13 April 2010

Author's response to reviews: see over
April 12, 2010

Dear Madam/Sir,

Please find attached a copy of the revised manuscript entitled “Prevalence of smoking during pregnancy and associated risk factors among Canadian women: A national survey”, which we are resubmitting for publication in *BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth*. All comments of the reviewers have been addressed below. All modifications in the text have been marked by red color.

Please let me know if you need further information…

Yours sincerely,

Ban Al-Sahab
School of Kinesiology and Health Science
Bethune College, 4700 Keele Street
Toronto ON M3J 1P3, Canada
Tel: 416-736-2100 Ext. 23340
Fax: 416-736-5774
Email: bsahab@yorku.ca
Reviewer 1:

Reviewer: No comments. The paper is acceptable now.
Author: The authors would like to thank the reviewer for their time and efforts in reviewing the paper.

Reviewer 2:

Reviewer: Methods: The authors wrote: Participants eligible for the study were women aged 15 years and above, who had singleton live births between the period of February 15, 2006 and May, 2006 in the provinces of Canada and between November 1, 2005 and February 1, 2006 in the territories of Canada and who lived with their baby at the time of data collection. A total of 8,542 Canadian women were randomly selected from the 2006 Canadian Census of Population. However according to the MES report it was not a random sample but a stratified random sample. Sampling frame was not the complete census population but a sampling frame based on recent births within the census population. The MES report describes it as follows: A stratified random sample of 8,542 women was selected without replacement, using recent births drawn from a Census-based sampling frame. Please revise.
Author: Acknowledged. The necessary changes have been made.

Reviewer: I commented on the modelling with variable selection based on univariate screening. I maintain that this method is not valid. In Harrell F.E. Regression Modeling Strategies With Applications to Linear Models, Logistic Regression, and Survival Analysis, Springer 2001 chapter 4, it is phrased as follows: “Many papers claim that there were insufficient data to allow for multivariate modeling so they did “univariable screening” wherein only “significant” variables were entered into the model. This is thus even worse than forward stepwise modeling as it can miss important variables that are only important after adjusting for other variables.” However I do realise that one might be more or less strict in applying this rule and that I probably belong to the “strict” group. I’ll leave the decision to the authors.
Author: The authors acknowledge the reviewer’s comment. However, only two variables were not included in the final model. When these variables were added to the model, the results remained the same. Therefore, the authors would like to keep the analysis as is.