Author's response to reviews

Title: Breastfeeding attitudes of Finnish mothers and fathers during pregnancy

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

We would like to thank the reviewers for their encouraging and valuable comments and suggestions concerning our manuscript entitled “Finnish parents’ breastfeeding attitudes and related demographic characteristics during pregnancy” (MS: 1337778417354656). We have taken into account all comments and suggestions, which have been important in improving our paper. A point-by-point response to the comments is appended to this cover letter.

Yours sincerely,

on behalf of all authors

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Response to the comments

General comments

The major changes compared to the original manuscript are presented below (page and paragraph numbers refer to the original manuscript):

1. The language and grammar have been checked carefully.

2. Title of the manuscript
   * The title has been changed.

3. Abstract
   * The comparison groups have been added to the results section of the abstract. (page 1, paragraph 3)
   * The conclusions have been specified. (page 2, paragraph 1)

4. Background
   * The references have been revised (page 2, paragraph 3) and the research questions have been specified. (page 5, paragraph 1)

5. Methods
   * Study design has been added. (page 5)
   * Information on the ethical permission has been specified. There are no ethical committees in the research area and therefore ethical permission was obtained from the medical director of Mikkeli (a city) and from the director of the public health service of Kouvola (a city). They are responsible for ethical permission for medical studies in the research area because they are the leaders of the health services in these cities. Making decisions about ethical permission for studies is part of their work. (page 8, paragraph 1)

6. Results
   * The paragraphs “Breastfeeding attitudes by gender”, “Breastfeeding attitudes by parity”, “Breastfeeding attitudes by age”, “Breastfeeding attitudes by education level” “Breastfeeding attitudes by knowledge level” have been removed as suggested. (page 10, all paragraphs and page 11, paragraphs 1 and 2)

7. Discussion
   * Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for all dimensions of the scale have been added and explain the reliability of the scale. (page 13, paragraph 4)

8. Figure 1 has been removed.

9. Table 3 has been changed to describe the scenarios by gender.
Detailed comments by Donna Chapman:

1. Comment (major compulsory revision):

Please provide information on the BKAC's Cronbach's alpha. Without this information, it is difficult to assess the reliability of the BKAC.

Answer:
We have added the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the knowledge (α=0.84) and confidence (α=0.932) dimensions to the manuscript; now on page 13, paragraph 3 in the revised version.

The following were minor essential revisions:

2. Comment:
Page 1, Results (The respondents, who were primiparae...)
This sentence does not indicate the comparison groups.

Answer:
We have added the comparison groups to the abstract; now on page 2, paragraph 3 in the revised version.

3. Comment:
Page 2, last sentence of conclusions
The phrase, "focused on the groups indicated" is too vague, please clarify.

Answer:
We have named the groups on which counseling should be focused; now on page 3, paragraph 1 in the revised version.

4. Comment:
Page 2, reference 11
The mention of a 1976 study (34 years old) is too outdated for the literature review.

Answer:
We have omitted this reference and used newer references in the text; now on page 3, paragraph 3 in the revised version.
5. Comment:
Page 2, second to last line and throughout text
Recommend that you avoid colloquial phrases such as "nowadays".

Answer:
We have deleted the phrase “nowadays” and asked the native English speaker to check the text and mark as well as suggest replacements for colloquial phrases.

6. Comment:
Page 3, line 1, "rather than mothers"
There are many studies of mothers’ attitudes. This sentence does not seem true.

Answer:
We have replaced the word “rather” with “as well as”; now on page 3, paragraph 3 in the revised version.

7. Comment:
Page 4, (The breastfeeding rates decrease rapidly and 60%...)
Please double check the Labbok reference, as it does not include small amounts of water in the definition of exclusively breastfed infants.

Answer:
We apologize for this mistake. We have omitted the reference.

8. Comment:
Page 6, "Mothers confidence about, for example,..."
This sentence is confusing, as it does not seem related to this paper. It may be clearer if you delete this sentence.

Answer:
This has been deleted as suggested.

9. Comment:
Page 8, second line from the bottom
Does "breastfeeding scores" reflect the breastfeeding attitude score? Please clarify.

Answer:
We have added that it was “breastfeeding knowledge scores”; now on page 10, paragraph 1 in the revised version.

10. Comment:
Page 8, last line and throughout the manuscript
Recommend that you use a more neutral term than "mediocre".

Answer:
We have changed “mediocre” to “moderate”.

11. Comment:
Page 10
Much of this information is already stated in Table 4. Recommend deleting this text to avoid duplication.

Answer:
We have deleted the sections “Breastfeeding attitudes by gender”, “Breastfeeding attitudes by parity”, “Breastfeeding attitudes by age”, “Breastfeeding attitudes by education level” “Breastfeeding attitudes by knowledge level”.

12. Comment:
Page 12, line 5
Delete "is not".

Answer:
We have deleted it as suggested; now on page 12, paragraph 1, first line in the revised version.

13. Comment:
Page 12, line 6
Public breastfeeding is protected by law in several US states, not just in Arkansas.

Answer:
We have added “e.g. in Arkansas”; now on page 12, paragraph 1, the second line in the revised version.

14. Comment:
Page 13, (The reliability of the BKAC is considered as fairly good...) This sentence does not provide information on the overall Cronbach's alpha. What do you mean by "for the first measure"?

Answer:
We have added the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of the knowledge and confidence dimension to this section. Thus all Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of the scale dimensions are reported; now on page 13, paragraph 3 in the revised version.

The Breastfeeding Knowledge, Attitude and Confidence Scale was developed for this study and therefore this is the first time that such data has been collected from pregnant women and fathers.

15. Comment:
General question
How is the reliability of the scenarios tested in your scale?

Answer:
The scenarios were included in the pretest as well as when the experts assessed the measurement.
16. Comment:
Page 15, Conclusion 2
The term, "apprehensive" seems overly strong. I don't think you measured apprehension.

Answer:
We have changed “apprehensive” to “worried”; now on page 15, conclusion 2 in the revised version.

17. Comment:
Page 15, Conclusion 3
It seems odd to be publishing data based on the scale if you are not certain of its reliability. Please clarify.

Answer:
The reliability of the scale was tested with Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, which was 0.84 in the knowledge dimension, 0.932 in the confidence dimension and from 0.602 to 0.858 in the attitude dimension. The reliability of the scale is thus good.

18. Comment:
Table 3
It would be interesting to see the data by gender.

Answer:
We have changed this as recommended.

19. Comment:
Figure 1 does not seem necessary. Recommend deleting it.

Answer:
We have deleted it as recommended.
Detailed comments by Maryelena Vargas:

1. Comment:
Do the authors mean childbearing families at any stage; or pregnant?

Answer:
We meant only pregnant families and therefore have replaced the word “childbearing” with “pregnant”.

2. Comment:
Please identify study design under Methods.

Answer:
We have added this as suggested; now on page 6, paragraph 2 in the revised version.

3. Comment:
Are the data sound?
The authors claim data is sound; however, it may help to contact an expert to assess reliability of this newly developed scale. For some of the factors, reliability is below 0.70. It is usually best if it is at 0.70 or higher before an instrument can be used. Please see below.
Factor 2 Regarding breastfeeding as exhausting for the mother 0.602
Factor 3 Family-centred view on breastfeeding 0.643
Factor 4 Equality in feeding 0.655

Answer:
We have consulted a statistician as suggested. The limits of reliable measurements are not equivocal and for example Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998) state in “Multivariate data analysis” that Cronbach’s alpha coefficients over 0.6 are acceptable. This reference is referred to on page 13, paragraph 3 in the revised version.

4. Comment:
Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
No

Methods
The electronic Breastfeeding Knowledge, Attitude and Confidence scale (BKACs) was developed and 172 people (123 mothers, 49 fathers) completed the study. The data were analysed with factor analysis and nonparametric methods. The title is “breastfeeding attitudes of Finnish mothers and fathers during pregnancy”; however, the purpose of the study was to describe...... Attitudes and discover how demographic characteristics related to them. Development of the scale and Demographic characteristics related to attitudes need to be part of the title of the study. A suggestion is: “Development of a... Scale to describe Finnish Parents breastfeeding attitudes and its relationship to selected demographic characteristics during pregnancy”
Answer:
We have changed the title to “Finnish parents’ breastfeeding attitudes and related demographic characteristics during pregnancy”.

5. Comment: Is the writing acceptable?
Overall, there were several instances I had minor concerns regarding clarity of sentence style and structure, choice of words and punctuation, such as comma usage and semicolon usage; e.g. use semicolon before; however, and comma after, and grammar usage. For example, the following sentence on page 12,
“Studies conducted in other cultures have indicated that breastfeeding in front of others is not might be seen as embarrassing [57, 58]” not sure what “is not might be seen” means in this sentence.

Answer:
A native English speaker had proofread the manuscript before we first submitted it to the BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth. We have sent the revised manuscript and all the comments regarding the language to a professional proofreading service and the text has been revised again.

We have clarified the sentence as follows:
“Studies conducted in other cultures have indicated that breastfeeding in front of others might be seen as embarrassing”; now on page 11, paragraph 3, last line in the revised version.

6. Comment:
Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
Clarify title, research questions and review the document for sentence structure and grammar usage.

Answer:
We have clarified the title and it is now congruent with the study questions. The text of this revised manuscript has been proofread again. The structure of the sentences and the grammar have been checked.
Detailed comments by Roger A Edwards

1. Comment:
I believe the authors have done a good job with the factor analysis; however, they also need to implement a multivariable analysis to more appropriately understand the relationships among the variables that predict attitudes. The existing results really suggest the need for such a multivariable analysis.

Answer:
We have discussed this with the statistician and implemented a linear regression analysis for each sum score variable of the attitude dimension. We used gender, age, education, parity, breastfeeding knowledge and breastfeeding history as the independent variables because there were differences in those groups when the sum score variables of the breastfeeding attitudes were tested (Table 4). We carried out the regression analysis using different methods but the results were quite similar in every method. The stepwise regression indicated that these variables explained from 9.4% to 18% of the variation in the attitude sum score variables. Most of the variables were excluded from the final analysis. We decided that this regression analysis was not worth reporting in the manuscript because the explanation rate was poor and only a few variables were included in the final regression analysis. In this study we did not follow-up the families until the baby was born or until they breastfed or weaned their infants. Thus it was not possible to find out how the breastfeeding attitudes during pregnancy were related to the duration of breastfeeding.