Author's response to reviews

Title: Height, weight and BMI percentiles and nutritional status relative to the international growth references among Pakistani school-aged children

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Version: 2 Date: 10 January 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
Re: MS #9620621846102408

We are pleased to submit the revision of our manuscript titled “Height, weight and BMI percentiles and nutritional status relative to the international growth references among Pakistani school-aged children.”

The paper has been thoroughly revised according to the reviewers’ and editorial comments. We have tried our best to address all the comments and queries. Some minor revisions and additions that we felt necessary have also been made to make the manuscript more comprehensive and clear. For your convenience, we have marked the major changes made in red; however, some of the changes may not be marked as the paper has been extensively revised.

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Response to additional comments from the Editor

Thank you so much for considering the manuscript for publication in BMC Pediatrics. We accept the full responsibility for the errors present in some parts of the manuscript. There was a problem with BMI calculation. It was earlier noted by the study team, and all analyses were re-checked, and modified accordingly. The fault was in database generation and there were two variables for BMI, one of those was correct; therefore, the confusion rose in some parts of the analyses. Necessary corrections were made in the study report, and wherever required. At the time of submission, this paper could not be updated. We have thoroughly revised the paper, and carefully addressed all the reviewers’ concerns. Issues with the BMI calculation and study rationale (aims) have been settled. We hope that the revised paper is acceptable for publication. The corresponding author takes full responsibility for the errors present and necessary corrections.

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The revised manuscript confirms to the journal style and all files are correctly formatted. Manuscript is carefully checked for any typographical and content errors. It has been a great experience to publish with you and we highly appreciate the time and efforts of the editorial and publication teams.

Regards

M. U. Mushtaq, MBBS
Principal Investigator /
Corresponding Author
Response to reviewer’s comments: Reviewer 2

Dear Carla Pedros

Thank you for considering the potential importance of the findings reported. We are highly grateful for your valuable time and comments for the improvement of this manuscript. We have tried our best to address the concerns raised and the manuscript has been thoroughly revised.

The manuscript has been proofread carefully for language issues. The paper had been written in US English and was reviewed by a native English speaker from United States.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. We accept full responsibility for the errors present in some parts of the manuscript. There was a problem with BMI calculation. It was earlier noted by the study team, and all analyses were re-checked, and modified accordingly. The fault was in database generation and there were two variables for BMI, one of those was correct; therefore, the confusion rose in some parts of the analyses. Necessary corrections were made in the study report, and wherever required. At the time of submission, this paper could not be updated. We have carefully revised the paper and addressed all the issues. The data has been re-analyzed and re-interpreted, and in accordance, ‘Results’ and ‘Discussion’ sections are re-written.

2. The Abstract has been shortened and revised as suggested.

3. Both the CDC and WHO charts are of interest as potentially useful for Pakistani children, therefore, comparisons were made with both charts. The estimated derived by the IOTF cut-offs were also described.

4. The IOTF cut-offs are discussed and interpreted in the manuscript as suggested.

5. Results section has been thoroughly updated. We hope that it is clear now.

6. When the IOTF cut-offs were used, unusual results were obtained due to errors in some parts of BMI analyses. Manuscript has been revised, and re-written.

7. Discussion has been improved and re-interpreted in the light of the new results.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The term “nutritional indicators” has been corrected to “nutritional status”, as suggested.

2. The median age has been presented in Years, as suggested.

3. The “all P<0.001” has been corrected to “P<0.001”

4. Repeated description of results has been avoided in discussion.

5. Social epidemiology in Pakistan does not include description of ethnic groups, thus, the data was not collected for that. Socioeconomic status, area of residence, neighborhood
income, parental education, and other socio-demographic factors were evaluated. Description of social determinants is out of the scope of current paper as it was aimed to compare the international growth references among Pakistani school-aged children.

6. The description of socio-demographic determinants of nutritional status is found elsewhere, and has been discussed and referenced in the manuscript.

7. The legend has been updated for P values presented in Table 5 as suggested to “P values are for mean difference from zero for height-, weight- and BMI-for age z scores (obtained from the study data) relative to the WHO 2007 and US CDC 2000 references”.

8. Figures 5 to 7 and Figures 2 to 4 were a repetition of the same data with only another type of presentation, and one of these has been excluded. Figure legends have been updated as suggested.

We are indebted to you for your time and comments to make this manuscript much more clear and comprehensive.


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Response to reviewer’s comments: Reviewer 1

Dear Anuradha Khadilka

Thank you for considering the potential importance of the findings reported. We are highly grateful for your valuable time and comments to improve the manuscript. The paper has been thoroughly revised according to your comments.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The aim of the paper is not to provide references. It was aimed to compare the international growth references among Pakistani school-aged children. The manuscript has been revised accordingly.

2. The study was aimed to explore nutritional status among primary school children, therefore, the sample included only primary schools and the age group of 5-12 was included in the study. The manuscript has been revised accordingly.

3. In the data collection section, details of height and weight scales are included and the reference is provided to the manufacturer’s website. The study was not funded by any agency and was conducted with a minimal financial support from Allama Iqbal Medical College, Lahore, Pakistan (Approx. US $ 650). The survey was made possible by personal expense and untiring efforts of the investigators and technical support from the Punjab Departments of Health and Education and Allama Iqbal Medical College, Lahore, Pakistan. The scales used for routine growth monitoring in pediatric and primary care clinics at all tertiary, secondary and primary care health facilities in Punjab, Pakistan were
used for the survey. These have an accuracy of 0.5 kg and that is mentioned in the methods with reference to the manufacturer’s website.

4. Coefficient of variation for intra and inter observer variability was not assessed but the processes were pre-tested. The measurements were tested for reliability by one-week test-retest method and that school was excluded from sampling. Manuscript is updated accordingly.

5. Twenty trained senior medical students including 10 males and 10 females, lead by the Principal Investigator, collected the data. Manuscript is updated accordingly.

6. The instruments were checked and calibrated on a daily basis. Manuscript is updated accordingly.

7. Description of social determinants is out of the scope of current paper as it was aimed to compare the international growth references among Pakistani school-aged children. The description of socio-demographic determinants of nutritional status is found elsewhere, and has been discussed and referenced in the manuscript.

8. The reference for the IOTF cut-offs has been updated.

**Minor Essential Revisions**

1. Abstract is updated, as suggested.

2. Background: The aim of the paper is not to provide references. It was aimed to compare the international growth references among Pakistani school-aged children. The manuscript has been revised accordingly.

3. Methods: For each school, a list of all classes in the five grades (one to five) was obtained and one class in each grade was randomly selected. The children aged five to twelve years in those classes were included in the study. The analysis was conducted with respect to age groups in years; therefore, there are eight age groups.

4. Statistics: LMS growth provided by the UK Medical Research Council was used for LMS. A reference has been updated in the manuscript. (Pan H, Cole T: *LMS growth. Medical Research Council, United Kingdom, 2002-07. South Shields, United Kingdom: Harlow Printing Limited.*

5. Discussion has been improved and re-interpreted in the light of the new results.

6. Reference formatting has been checked.

We are indebted to you for your time and comments to make this manuscript much more clear and comprehensive.

**M. U. Mushtaq, et al.**

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