Author’s response to reviews

Title: The effects of individual, family and environmental factors on physical activity levels in children: a cross-sectional study

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
14/03/14
Dear Dr. Parkinson,

Thank you for considering a further revised version of our manuscript entitled “The effects of individual, family and environmental factors on physical activity levels of children” for publication in BMC Pediatrics. All authors have approved the revised manuscript and fulfilled conditions required for authorship and have no stated conflicts of interest.

We are delighted that we successfully revised the manuscript to meet the previous recommendations of the reviewers. We are grateful to the referee and the Editor for identifying some further clarifications and changes needed in the paper. We have addressed the reviewers’ minor concerns point by point in the following pages.

We hope that these changes fulfil the requirements to make this manuscript acceptable for publication in BMC Pediatrics.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sharon Cadogan, Eimear Keane, Patricia Kearney
Response to reviewer comments for:

Title: The effects of individual, family and environmental factors on physical activity levels in children: a cross-sectional study

Authors: Sharon L Cadogan, Eimear Keane and Patricia M Kearney

MS ID: 1992887191102887

Journal: BMC Pediatrics

Article type: Research article

Additional formatting request

Comment: We would ask you please include a statement on whether the data set used for this study is publicly available, who is responsible for granting access to the data, and whether the data is fully anonymized.

Response: Thank you. The following statement has been added to the text:

Line 76-78: “The data (in the form of an Anonymised Microdata File, AMF) are archived in the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA) and are available to researchers on request”.

Reviewer #2: April Oh

Thank you for your much valued further comments. We have adapted the manuscript accordingly.

Minor revisions:

Comment: The abstract makes a recommendation for policy change. The discussion and conclusion sections of the manuscript do not appear to strongly argue for a specific policy change. A policy change recommendation is outside of the scope of the paper given the study limitations and sample. Please revise the abstract conclusion so that it is aligned with the conclusions stated in the manuscript.

Response: Thank you for highlighting this. The abstract conclusion and been revised and now reads:

Line 26-29: “Individual level factors appear to predict PA levels when considered in the multiple domains. Future research should aim to use more robust objective measures to explore the usefulness of the interconnect that exists across these domains. In particular how the family and environmental settings could be useful facilitators for consistent individual level factors such as sports participation”.

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Comment: On line 339, should this be revised to “individual factors” or “characteristics?” The authors should be aware that individual factors are more proximal to the individual so it is not surprising that results found they were stronger predictors of physical activity.

Response: Thank you. This sentence has been changed to read:

Line: 339: “Remarkably, individual characteristics appear to predict PA levels when considered in the multiple domains”

Comment: Define “mainstream” for the journal’s international audience.

Response: Mainstream schools in Ireland refer to ordinary schools that do not cater for special educational needs. A reference that explains the school selection process in greater detail, including the characteristics of the schools sampled has now been provided.


Comment: On line 100, what do the authors mean by “potentially sensitive questions?” Please clarify.

Response: Thank you. A reference which explains these questions in greater detail has been provided. This sentence has also been altered to include examples of sensitive questions:

Line 102-104: “There was also a self-complete paper-based supplement for all respondents, which included some potentially sensitive questions such as issues about the marital relationship, marital conflict, experience of depression, and use of drugs [24].”

Comment: The paper cited in line 311 is for self reported height and weight in college students. The self reported height and weight citation that would be a more appropriate comparison is parent reported height and weight.

Response: Thank you. A more appropriate paper examining parent reported data for calculating child’s weight status versus objectively measured height and weight data has now been cited.

Comment: Line 316: Clarify the statement: “survey mode of stata.”

Thank you for this comment. Survey data commands have been mentioned in the methods section with respect to the data analysis. The statement in the discussion relates back to this and has been rephrased to state the following:

**Line 317/318**: “Further, probability weights were applied to the data using survey data commands to ensure that the findings are national representative”.

Comment: Please refer to “hobby” or “favorite activity” consistently throughout the paper.

Response: Thank you. The document has been searched and the term favourite hobby is now used throughout the text.

Comment: Line 227: The authors suggest policy strategies. Please be more specific here. It is unclear that policy recommendations can be made given the scope of the paper and its limitations.

Response: Thank you. Any suggestions for policy strategies have been removed from the text. The sentence now reads:

**Line 299**: “In particular, the importance of built environments for increasing PA and other health behaviours has emerged in the literature[37, 38]”.

Comment: Line 335: Delete this sentence. It is unclear how this relates to the sentence in line 334.

Response: Thank you. This sentence has been omitted from the text.