Author's response to reviews

Title: Exploring healthy eating practices and physical activity among adolescent girls in rural South Africa

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dr. Kathryn Parkinson and Ms. Catherine Olino

Re: Resubmission of manuscript MS: 3341193231208254: Exploring healthy eating practices and physical activity among adolescent girls in rural South Africa.

Thank you for allowing us to submit a revision of the above mentioned manuscript and the comments from the reviewers which we have helped improve our manuscript. Please accept the attached revised manuscripts where comments raised by reviewers have been addressed.

Yours sincerely

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Reviewers’ comments and feedback:

Reviewers: Rachel Tyrrell & Herculina Salome Kruger

1. The analysis feels descriptive in nature and in its current form the paper appears to present findings under headings based on the questions asked in the interviews not by the themes emerging from the data; this is an important distinction. – A semi-structured interview guide was formulated across the main domains informed by the triadic model stream of influences, and these focus areas form the basis of the subheadings.

   This has been clarified in the manuscript.

2. Did the themes emerge from the data or from the questions asked via the interview guide? - The structure was informed from questions asked using the interview guide, and the themes presented emerged within each domain.

3. It needs to be made clear how the data were driven for the analysis. It would be nice to see the results structured under headings reflecting the factors and themes being presented as I’m not sure that ‘barriers and facilitators’ best describe the data presented within the subheadings. There appears to be a contradiction in the findings between the availability of healthy foods being a barrier and green leafy vegetables (healthy foods) being linked with poverty and therefore not desirable to the adolescents. – The subheadings have been edited to reflect findings, and findings clarified in abstract and discussion section.

4. In the current state, the paper needs editing for errors in English language, writing tense and grammar. – The paper had been edited for English, tense and grammar

Title

5. Suggest title change: Title changed – “Exploring healthy eating practices and physical activity among adolescent girls in rural South Africa”

Abstract

Background

6. Start sentence Dietary behaviours… remove second ‘increasing’ from first sentence. – edited (page 1, line 5)

Methods

7. Make it clear that the duo-interviews were with friends – clarified (p 2, line 15)

Results

8. – The results presented in the abstract do not appear to reflect the findings of the study. First sentence, ‘fruits’ included as a facilitator but from reading the manuscript fruits were a luxury food. ‘…were great facilitators…’or better described as a factor they were aware of? – Clarified (p 2, line 19) Fruits constituted healthy foods
9. Limited availability to healthy food – I got the impression that locally grown vegetables (healthy foods) were available in the community, and so this seems to contradict what is in the paper. – clarified, even though they had access to locally grown vegetables, they still felt they didn’t have enough access to other healthy foods

Conclusion

10. – L 5 change ‘breakfast eating’ to ‘breakfast provision’ - edited (p 3, line 8)

Introduction


13. Para 2 – description of grades 8-11 is not very useful for international audiences. Reporting the age range would be more helpful for non-South African readers. Also include number of young people who completed this survey n=? – clarified (p 4, line 14)

14. Para 3 – Not sure these stats are the ‘combined prevalence’… Overweight =40.9% and obesity = 9.5% so combined – 50.4%? This needs to be made clearer. – clarified (p 4, line 18)


16. Para 3 – Remove ‘clearly’ from beginning of final sentence. – removed (p 7, line 6)

17. Para 4 – The last sentence repeats the first, only need to state once. - edited

18. Para 4, L2 - No association between friend overweight? This needs to be made clearer. - clarified (p 5, line 9)

19. Para 4, L6 – It would be nice to have an explanation of ‘kota’- explained (p 5, line 15)

20. Para 4, L7 – change to ‘minimal physically active… ’- changed (p 5, line 18)

21. Para 5 – need to make clear that the study is following on from work in urban SA adolescents. – clarified (p 6, line 4)

22. Last para, L1 (aim) should maybe be included in the previous paragraph. Second sentence might be better placed in the discussion or conclusions- sentence moved to conclusion (p 6, line 4, moved to p 24, line 14)

Methods Study setting

23. Suggest structure of this section follows the format: who, what, sampling, analysis – structure adjusted
Study design and data collection

17. Para 1, L1 - reference [10] – Are there any methods papers that could be referenced for this approach (p 6, line 2)
18. Para 1, L2 - change ‘applied in’ to ‘used’- edited (p 7, line 3)
19. Para 1, L3 - change ‘anecdotally’ to ‘population’ – overall sentence doesn’t make much sense so suggest making point more clearly. Sentence edited
20. Para 1, L5, Para 1, L6; Para 2, L6 – paragraphs rephrased and restructured (p 7, line 11)
21. Para 2, sentence 2, suggest: All participants gave informed written consent. In addition, written consent was obtained from caregivers for those participants aged under 18 years. – edited (p 7, line 21)
22. Para 3, L2 - insert ‘(the local vernacular)’ after Shangaan. – edited (p 8, line 2)
23. Para 3, L5 - consider adding reference re: validity testing of interview topic guides – reference added (p 8, line 7)
24. Para 4, L1 - First three aspects for exploration could be reduced. Suggest following: ‘The interview guide was designed to explore the following: dietary and physical activity practices, attitudes towards healthy eating and physical activity including barriers and facilitators, understanding…’- edited (p 8, line 11)
25. Para 4, L8 - remove ‘namely’- removed (p 8, line 21)
26. Para 4, L10 - remove ‘factors such as’. Change ‘situation’ to ‘environment’; Para 4 – would benefit from a brief further explanation of biological and personality factors - clarified (p 8, Line 22)
27. Para 4, L15 – remove (the local vernacular) as state previously in methods - removed
28. Para 4, L16 – change ‘attended as observer’ to ‘observed’; Para 4, L16 – Debriefing – make clearer that this was for the researchers. Were the participants debriefed? – paragraph edited (p 8, line 22)
29. However, the section from debriefing might would be better placed in the data handling and analysis section. – section moved to p 9, line 12
30. Data handing and analysis . L3 – Thematic content – did the themes emerge from the data or from the questions asked via the interview guide? MHS coded the transcripts – did anyone else read all or a sub-sample of the transcripts and cross-validate coding? – clarified (p 9, line 24)
Results

31. General - Would be nice to have a summary paragraph at the end of each section to sum up findings. – Summary paragraph is at the beginning of each section

32. Health eating practices – changed to Perceptions related to healthy eating practices; (p 10, line 10) – change ‘the households’ to ‘their households’ – changed (p 10, line 14)

33. Para 1, L4 – change to ‘perceptions of health foods’ – changed (p 10, line 13)

34. Para 2, L4 – clarify which environment the limited choices and lack of food refers to – home, school, both? – clarified (p11, Line 15)

35. Para 3 – The second quote doesn’t reflect a ‘consequence’. Perhaps this quote is better placed in previous section about choices. – quote moved (p 11, Line 8)

36. Para 4, L3 – is this a self-protective measure? Possible coping mechanism? – clarified (p 12, Line 10)

37. Para 4, L5 – Sentence starting ‘One participant… ‘could be structured more clearly; Para 4, L7 – suggest change to: Very few (two participants) who reported eating breakfast had more than one option available to them. – Sentences restructured and edited (p 12, Line 12)

38. Facilitators to healthy eating practices – changed to Factors facilitating healthy eating practices (p 12, line 17): General – can use SA names for foods previously defined in the transcript e.g. green leafy vegetables = miroho, maize based staple = pap – edited “miroho” and “pap” used throughout the transcript

39. Para 1, L7 – …spinach, lettuce and miroho. – edited (p 12, Line 24)

40. Para 1, L10 – is this contextual information from researcher knowledge or from interview data? – clarified (p 13, Line 1)

41. Para 1, L13 onward – quoted by adolescents? – Were female caregivers interviewed or is this the perception of adolescents/ researchers? - clarified (p 12, Line 8)

42. Barriers to healthy eating practices – heading changed to Factors acting as barriers to healthy eating practices (p 15, line 5)

43. Para 1, L1 – informants = participants? - edited (p 15, Line 9)

44. Para 1, L5 – suggest splitting sentence to read ‘…frozen chicken etc. Most of the girls referred…’- edited (p 15, Line 13)

45. Para 1, L7 – delete word ‘most’- deleted (p 15, Line 15)

46. Para 1, L7 – Needs more detail re: affording to eat certain foods – is this a lack of funds for the foods all of the time or when the main groceries have run out?- clarified (p 16, Line 13)

47. Para 1, L11 – change ‘the basics’ to ‘staple foods’- edited (p 15, Line 20)
48. Para 3, L3 – I’m a little confused – Is the school “healthy” lunch free? – there are healthier options sold by vendors and the school feeding programme also serves healthy food, but the healthier option sold are not affordable, so they buy cheaper snacks – clarified (p 16, line 13)

49. Para 3 – I feel a need for it to be clearer that some of the points being made are from the interview data and therefore a reflection of the perception the girls have of the food sold at school and not an objective measure. – clarified (p 16, Line 19)

50. Quote following para 3 – Any data to suggest where are the fat cakes and niknaks are bought from? I get the impression that the girls would rather eat these foods than the “free” lunch provided at school. This is an interesting point that could be explored further- clarified (this point is also expanded on in the discussion section on buying power) (p 17, line 2)

51. Para 4 – last sentence might be better placed to open this results section. Delete ‘clearly’ from the beginning of sentence. – moved to beginning of this section (p 15, Line 3)

52. Perceptions and practices related to physical activity Results presented cover perceptions of physical activity but not practices. Would suggest this is section is expanded to cover practices or change to section title. – Title changed to Perceptions related to physical activity (p 17, Line 22)

53. Facilitators of physical activity: This section seems to cover the practices in addition to facilitators…- Title changed to “Practices and factors facilitating physical activity” (p 18, Line 13)

54. Barriers towards physical activity – changed to “Factors acting as barriers to Physical Activity” (p 19, Line 18)

55. Discussion: Para 1, L9 – Suggest sentence reads – In the current study, the participants described healthy foods as food that have less fat and included traditional and locally grown foods. – edited (p 20, Line 21)

56. Reference [18] – not sure why this reference to a US study is included when talking about the current study.- reference edited

57. I’ve not checked in detail but it looks like reference [19] is a US study about physical activity. Might not be the best reference to use for dietary intake section.- Reference corrected

58. Para 2 – there needs to be a clearer view on the contradiction between availability of healthy foods being a barrier to healthy eating and green leafy vegetables being linked with poverty and therefore are available. These messages need to be portrayed more clearly.- clarified (p 21, Line 4)

59. Para 2, L10 – suggest removing ‘that the MMFA program resulted in’ from Sentence – removed (p 21, Line 22)

60. Para 3, L1 – remove ‘possibly’ – removed (p 22, Line 2)
Para 4, L1 – reference for school feeding programme? Suggest sentence reads: ‘The school feeding programme provides…’. Participants of the programme or study? If programme perhaps school students is a better term to use. – edited (p 22, Line 12)

Para 5, L2 – ‘in this setting’ probably not needed. Edited (p 22, Line 17)

Para 5, L5 – sentence needs to be restructured to be easier to read. Suggestion ‘… where overall adolescents believed…’ – edited (p 22, Line 20)

Para 5, L6 – need to make clear when talking about the current study. Suggest change in tense – ‘did articulate’ to ‘articulated’ – edited (p 22, Line 21)

Para 5, L10 – Use of ‘word ‘study’ to describe Shepherd et al eludes to it being a primary study although it is a systematic review. Please make it clear what type of paper is being presented. – clarified (p 22, Line 25)

Para 5, L12 – Last sentence doesn’t make any sense in the context. Suggest making the point more clear or removing sentence. - removed

Para 6, L1 – remove ‘clearly’ from beginning of sentence – removed (p 23, Line 3)

Para 6, L9 – start sentence at ‘As’. Edited (p 23, Line 3) Again, I got the impression that vegetables were cheaper than other foods for these families and therefore if the cost of living was increasing consumption of fast food would decrease as they are more expensive? – the consumption of fast foods is being driven by easy access, popularity and convenience (p 23, line 11)

Para 10 – first sentence needs to be made clearer. Soweto girls are the urban girls so do you mean rural girls for the comparison? – clarified (p 24, Line 1)

Para 12, L2 – instead of using ‘grade 12’ an age range e.g. over 16(?) or more general term of ‘older adolescents’ could be used. Edited (p 24, Line 14)

Para 2 – last sentence could be restructured for easier reading – remove middle section and add ‘in sports by black learners’ to the end. – edited (p 24, Line 20)

Conclusions

Para 1, L4 – start sentence with ‘Female’ – are these caregivers and elderly in the community? - edited (p 25, Line 4)

Para 1, L6 – food availability – is this in conjunction with food poverty? It’s stated that the girls know the benefits but do they feel able to eat breakfast? Edited (p 25, Line 7)

Para 2, L1 – suggest the following: Physical activities that adolescents currently engage in such as… - edited (p 25, Line 12)