Author's response to reviews

Title: The relationship between facial skeletal class and expert-rated interpersonal skill: an epidemiological survey on young Italian adults

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Appleford,

Please find enclosed the newly revised version of the manuscript “The relationship between facial skeletal class and expert-rated interpersonal skill: an epidemiological survey on young Italian adults” by Senna et al.

Please note that we would like to thank you and the reviewers again for the work you have made. In fact, the criticisms undoubtedly improved both the scientific contents and the readability of our manuscript. You will see that we could comply with the requests of the referees and you will find in the following sheets the answers to each specific question.

We also went through the formatting checklist in order to ensure that our revised manuscript conformed to all of the points.

Regarding to the ethics concerns: please note that the data were recorded during a routinely performed assessment for the access to the Military Academy of Pozzuoli, Italy. Therefore, although the purposes of the study were explained to each candidate and an informed consent was signed, we did not seek for the approval of an ethics committee since the data would have been collected anyhow.

Finally, I would like to state that all the authors of the byline approved the manuscript content and that this manuscript is both, not under consideration for publication elsewhere, and free of any conflict of interest or financial implications.

Sincerely,

Guglielmo Campus, DDS, PhD
Assistant Clinical Professor
Dental Institute - University of Sassari - Italy
Reviewer: Raymond Edler

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. This issue has been addressed by a BioMed Central statistician: Dr. Jeremy Miles. According to his report: “The statistics look fine. Having a small sample is an explanation for not finding a statistically significant result (a type II error) when one should have found one. It is not an explanation for finding a significant result when one should not have found one (a type I error). The type I error rate is always 5%.”

Hence it would appear that the conclusions drawn are justified, at least regarding to the issue of our sample number.

2. Calculating the degree for each facial skeletal class was not possible during the short time allowed for the screening for the access to the Military Academy. Moreover, the fact that we collected a small sample could more easily explain a lack of significance than a positive association. Therefore, it appears to us reasonable concluding that, although the degree of the facial skeletal class and the vertical dimensions of the face are undoubtedly important in determining the perceived beauty, and thus, possibly, the expert-rated interpersonal skill, the facial skeletal class as assessed in this work is an important factor associated to this latter “psychological” outcome. Hence, as reported in the Discussion we are now considering the possibility of assessing in future studies the facial characteristics with more complex measures, possibly including vertical features as well.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The mistake in the Abstract has been corrected.

2. The last sentence of the Abstract as been changed accordingly to the suggestions of the referee.

3. All the evidence from the literature was quoted. To our knowledge, there are no additional papers. We would respectfully ask to the reviewer to indicate if he is in possess of bits of information which we are not aware of, since they will undoubtedly improve the scientific quality of our work.
4. Figure 1 clearly demonstrates a diagram of the three classes, a lateral cephalogram, and the determination of the ANB angle. Further simplification of the concept of facial skeletal class could possibly generate misunderstanding, resulting incorrect for a specialist readership. Nevertheless we especially agree with the reviewer on this issue, and in fact we quoted specific references that may allow the reader to further explore the unknown topics, as always occurs in works at the overlap between different disciplines.

5. The fact of being potentially unable to manage successfully interpersonal relationships (NS) is related not only to the lack of self confidence, but also to the general characteristics of the personality which are specifically investigated by the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2) test.

6. The data in the first paragraph have been now reported in Table 1.

7. The degree of the association reported in the Discussion has been moderated.

Reviewer: Mary Marazita

- The language has been reviewed according to the suggestions of the referee.