Author’s response to reviews

Title: Incarceration as a Key Variable in Racial Disparities of Asthma Prevalence

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
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RE: MS # 1252227300287520, revision 2

Dear Dr. Zauner,

Thank you for your review of our manuscript entitled “Incarceration as a Key Variable in Racial Disparities of Asthma Prevalence.” We appreciate the comments of the two reviewers and have incorporated the issues raised in the revised manuscript. Below you will find a response to each of reviewer 2’s suggestions and the corresponding corrections highlighted using “track changes” in the text (per your instructions).

Responses for Referee 2:

Minor Suggested Revisions

1. Introduction. Page 2. Paragraph 1. The first sentence would be clearer if a time period was given to support the statement that “incarceration has become increasingly frequent in the lives of Americans…”

Response 1: We have added the phrase “in the past two decades” to clarify the time period.

2. Introduction. Page 2. Paragraph 1. The first sentence appears to have a typo. It should read “disproportionate contact with…” It would be clearer if the sentence read “in prison and after release.”

Response 2: Thank you for spotting this typo. We have also added your suggested phrase “in prison and after release.”

3. Methods. Chronic Disease Measures, Page 5. Paragraph 1. The first sentence states the purpose of the study. This seems out of place in the section defining the coding of variables. It could be moved to the Introduction or as a potential lead sentence for the conclusion.
Response 3: We have moved this sentence so that it is now the lead sentence for the conclusion.

4. Analytic Methods. Page 7. Paragraph 1. The sentence beginning “As a result…” is long and could be restated in two sentences.

Response 4: We have split that sentence into two sentences.

5. Methods. Propensity Score Matching, Page 8 (bottom of page). The sentence beginning, “In contrast to traditional regression…” is long and could be restated in two sentences.

Response 5: We have split that sentence into three sentences.

6. Methods. Propensity Score Matching, Page 9. Paragraph 1. The sentence that begins, “Common support matching refers to defining a common support region…” is very long. This is a place where two sentences would be better.

Response 6: We have split that sentence into three sentences.

7. Results. Page 11 (middle of page). Delete the extra parenthesis after 4.5%.

Response 7: Thank you for spotting this typo. We have done so.

8. Table 3. One way to make Table 3 less cluttered would be to add a table note at the bottom of the table and list the reference groups. This would delete six rows.

Response 8: Thank you for the suggestion. We have done so.

9. Results. Page 11. Paragraph 1. Although some journals report adjusted odds ratios as (ORs), other journals use (AORs). The authors will want to check this with the journal editor.

Response 9: We will happily defer this decision to the journal editors. We did not see anything in the BMC Public Health website that indicates how they prefer reporting adjusted odds ratios.

10. Results. Page 12. Paragraph 1 (for Figure 1). In reporting the results for the figures please add the percentages for asthma attack and ED use for asthma. This change would make parallel structure with the other comparisons (access to health care provider and having health insurance). Adding percentages for all comparisons also makes it easier to interpret the Y-axis for the four figures.

Response 10: We have added the percentages for asthma attack and ED use for asthma to the text. Additionally we have changed the format of figure 1 such that the Y-axis is easier interpret for all four bar graphs.
11. Discussion. Page 14. Paragraph 1. The sentence that states, “Communities from larger correctional facilities are turning to other models…” is not clear. Please add a sentence to clarify “other models.”

Response 11: We have clarified that sentence.

Major Suggested Revisions
1. Results. Page 10. Paragraph 2. The data presented in the text for Table 2 are not shown in Table 2. If it is the authors’ preference to keep Table 2 as shown then the text explaining Table 2 could add (data not shown).

Response 1: We have included the phrase, “data not shown.”

2. Results. Page 11. Paragraph 1. The sentence that reports the adjusted odds ratio for the likelihood of having a history of incarceration among Black, Latino and white respondents was added in response to the reviewer’s comment. The addition is appreciated. However since the data are not shown in Table 3, the text should note (data not shown).

Response 2: We have included the phrase, “data not shown.”

3. Results. Page 11. Paragraph 1. The sentence explaining that the propensity score further lessened the odds that Blacks have asthma compared to whites seems an overstatement. The adjusted odds ratio for Blacks in Model 2 was 1.75 (95% CI = 0.98, 3.25). In Model 3 the adjusted odds ratio for Blacks was 1.76 (95% CI = 0.91, 3.39). Adding the propensity score to Model 3 appeared to make very little difference in the adjusted odds ratios for the variables included in both Models 2 and 3. Please consider restating this sentence.

Response 3: We have revised this sentence.

Thank you for your consideration of our manuscript.

Sincerely,

Emily Wang