Author's response to reviews

Title: Knowledge and attitudes of university students toward pandemic influenza: a cross-sectional study from Turkey

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Author's response to reviews:

15.06.2010
Editor in Chief
BMC Public Health
Dear Editor in chief,

Re: Knowledge and attitudes of university students toward pandemic influenza: a cross-sectional study from Turkey

Authors: Hulya Akan, Yesim Gurol, Guldal Izbirak, Sukran Ozdatl#, Gulden Yilmaz, Ayca Vitrinel, Osman Hayran

Thank you for giving me the opportunitly to review our manuscript for publication in your journal. The changes in the manuscript have been reviewed and approved by all the authors. Our manuscript copy-edited by a native English speaker working for a professional translation company named ARES. There are no conflicts of interest surrounding its publication. It has not been published in any other journals, nor its being considered for publication anywhere else. My response to the reviewer’s comments is attached below.

Sincerely yours

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Reviewer One
Thank you very much for your feedbacks. We reviewed the points you have mentioned about, as:
There are still many spelling mistakes and grammatical issues that require Attention
Our manuscript copy-edited by a native English speaker working for a professional translation company named ARES.
Minor revisions
Results
1. Were the participant’s representative of the student body at the University?
This question has not been answered
I am sorry, I thought that I had been explained.
The number of the students that would be included in the study to represent the student body at the university counted by the statistician as it has been explained in methodology in the part of “participants” as “In 2009, 13000 undergraduate students were registered in 11 colleges and 61 departments and a total of 1950 first year students were registered. The minimum sample size to represent this population at 95% confidence level was calculated to be 384”. Since 2nd yrs and 3rd yrs students of medicine and pharmacy had been taken special course about pandemic influenza, to avoid knowledge bias, we included 1st yrs students.
Discussion
1. Top of page 20: The authors need to be very careful when making comparisons between pandemic studies. Some of the literature that is used in this paragraph- relates to studies that were conducted prior to the H1N1 pandemic, and were undertaken at a time when H5N1 was thought to be the next potential cause of a pandemic. I would suggest to the authors to stick to comparing the results from their study with other studies which were undertaken last year(i.e. H1N1 studies). Also- the authors should note that the cohort in these comparison studies is usually the general public.
As the reviewer commented some of these studies were at the period of a probable “flu pandemic” and the expected pandemic was avian influenza. Since our study was conducted at the peak period of H1N1 pandemic and there
was no consensus about the severity of the disease and the results of the pandemic and there was only few literature directly about H1N1 pandemic, but we thought they were important to compare. Maybe, experience with H1N1 pandemic will effect the perceptions of future pandemics independently seriousness of the disease and probably previous experiences affected the perceptions of H1N1 pandemic.

Timing of the study and relation to pandemic period added to all referred studies to make clear in the 2nd and 4th paragraphs of the discussion part.

In the fourth paragraph of the discussion part, this reference and comparison was excluded: “In their study, Kristiansen et al [17] studied 1168 Norwegians and they found that 48% of respondents the perceived risk was lower than predicted by health authorities.”

2. The Van et al study was conducted during the peak of the pandemic also- so comparisons should be able to be made.

As it has been commented Van et al study is maybe the only study that is comparable. This study had been referred in two other paragraphs of the discussion and this parts expanded with the figures from the study. Also, the same study has been discussed in the paragraph related to hygiene behaviours.

3. There are problems with the references in the discussion - the numbers do not correspond correctly.

The references have been reviewed and changes made. The numbers corresponding incorrectly have been corrected.

4. An appropriate reference for the Australian National Survey should be included.

The reference added with the number 34 and also added to the reference list.

Tables
1. Table two: I think the scale used in this table can be condensed down to: Agree, disagree, unsure, not specified.

The table have been condensed. I think it is easy to follow and more understandable now.

2. Table four: I feel that this information does not need to be included as a table and could be easily summarised in the text

This question was open-ended and the expressions were very similar, so we wanted to show the results as a table. We preferred to keep this table.

Reviewer Two

Thank you very much for your feedbacks. We reviewed the points you have mentioned about, as:
Major Compulsory Revisions
1. It is acknowledged that considerable improvement has been made to the grammar and syntax since the first draft, however, the revision still contains many errors and requires a major review to bring it up to a suitable standard of English. I appreciate how difficult this must be for a non-English speaking contributor but in my opinion it would be not reflect well on the authors, reviewers or journal to publish this as is.
Our manuscript copy-edited by a native English speaker working for a professional translation company named ARES. I hope this is acceptable.

2. Table 1. Translation of the questions into English is problematic eg Q4 "swine flu is fatal". I presume that a more accurate translation of the original question is that 'the swine flu could cause fatalities'...this would cast a different slant on the result. Similarly, there are significant grammatical issues with some of the other questions.
Our manuscript and also the questionnaire copy-edited by a native English speaker working for a professional translation company named ARES. Also the questions in this table was edited by the same person.

3. The review should include other tables and attachments eg Table 3 mentions "Toplam" and Table 5 "Quarantina"
The review also included tables and questionnaire and the mistakes that have been pointed out corrected.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Results regarding perceptions that are reported in the abstract and repeated in the results section require revision along the lines: Overall 25.1% of respondents considered their risk to be high, 40.5% moderate etc. The current wording is misleading.
These have been revised and highlighted in the text.

2. Three different citation formats are used within the text. These should conform to the journal standard.
All citation formats were reviewed and corrected and also standardized according to the journal standard.

3. Non standard references are still present eg some journals are referenced as per PubMed abbreviations and others have the full name included. These should conform to the journal standard.
All references were reviewed and changed and also standardized according to
the journal standard.

Editorial Requests

1- As the reviewer commented some of these studies were at the period of a probable “flu pandemic” and the expected pandemic was avian influenza. Since our study was conducted at the peak period of H1N1 pandemic and there was no consensus about the severity of the disease and the results of the pandemic and there was only few literature directly about H1N1 pandemic, but we thought they were important to compare. Maybe, experience with H1N1 pandemic will effect the perceptions of future pandemics independently seriousness of the disease and probably previous experiences affected the perceptions of H1N1 pandemic.

Timing of the study and relation to pandemic period added to all referred studies to make clear in the 2nd and 4th paragraphs of the discussion part.

In the fourth paragraph of the discussion part, this reference and comparison was excluded: “In their study, Kristiansen et al [17] studied 1168 Norwegians and they found that 48% of respondents the perceived risk was lower than predicted by health authorities.”

2- English writing and grammer of the manuscript has been reviewed by a native English speaker by a professional translation company named ARES.