Author's response to reviews

Title: Lean mass, muscle strength, and physical function in a diverse population of men: a population-based cross-sectional study

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Version: 6 Date: 10 August 2010

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr. Graham,

We are delighted to provide further clarifications and changes in accordance with the reviewer’s remaining comments on the above-referenced manuscript. We have revised the manuscript accordingly, and detail our responses to the critiques below. All changes to the manuscript have been marked using track-changes. I assume that the manuscript will now be acceptable for publication in *BMC Public Health*. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lean mass, muscle strength, and physical function in a diverse population of men: a population-based cross-sectional study Andre B Araujo, Gretchen R Chiu, Varant Kupelian, Susan A Hall, Rachel E Williams, Richard V Clark and John B McKinlay

Reviewer's report

Title: Lean mass, muscle strength, and physical function in a diverse population of men: a population-based cross-sectional study

Version: 5 Date: 28 June 2010

Reviewer: Soham Al Snih

Reviewer's report:
The authors did address all comments from the reviewers. I have to minor comments:

1) Can you please clarify if the p-value < 0.05 in Table 1 means that all variables included in the Table were statistically significant across the groups?

>Response: In response to a previous request for statistical comparisons to be added to Table 1, we added a column to indicate pairwise statistical comparison of the 3 racial/ethnic groups. The threshold was p<0.05. The column labeled “Comparison” is meant to indicate which groups differ from one another and in what direction. For instance, in the first row of the table (lean mass), the value for the “Comparison” column is “H < B,W” which means that Hispanic men had lower lean mass than Black and White men, who had statistically similar levels of lean mass. No changes have been made to the manuscript.

2) According to the statistical section the p-values given in the Figure 1 refers to cross-sectional age differences by ethnic group. However, the way it reads is that the p-value given is for age differences or no differences for each ethnic group rather than across groups. Please clarify.

>Response: The reviewer is correct that the statistical analysis section states that “Line graphs showing cross-sectional age differences in the main outcomes by race/ethnicity are presented”. Furthermore, the figure legend states that “P-values test the null hypothesis of no age difference in outcome within each racial/ethnic group”. These two statements are consistent and are in response to a previous request for p-values to be added to the figure. The p-values represent the hypotheses we are interested in testing: i.e., does the outcome differ by age each of the racial/ethnic groups? No changes have been made to the manuscript.

3) I still don’t understand the statement about fractures in the conclusion section of the abstract and the entire manuscript.

>Response: In response to the reviewer’s statement, we have removed this point from the paper. See abstract and pp. 11 and 13 of the discussion.