Author's response to reviews

Title: Nutrient intakes of rural Tibetan mothers: a cross-sectional survey

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Version: 4 Date: 10 November 2010

Author's response to reviews: see over
10 November 2010

Dear Dr Norton,

Re: MS: 1664372890365243-Nutrient intakes of rural Tibetan mothers: a cross-sectional survey

We thank the reviewers for their time and thoughtful comments.

To make the reviewer comments available to all of the co-authors, we have repeated the comments from all of the reviewers below. We have responded to the comments for each reviewer and have indicated the changes made in the manuscript.

Thank you for considering our revised manuscript.

Yours sincerely,

Zhenjie Wang, on behalf of authors

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Response to Reviewer 2

Dear Reviewer,

We are extremely grateful for your review of the manuscript. You have raised a number of important issues. We agree with your comments and have modified our manuscript accordingly, as documented below.

Reviewer's report

Title: Nutrient intakes of rural Tibetan mothers: a cross-sectional survey
Version: 3 Date: 14 September 2010
Reviewer: Carl Lachat

General
The authors have made substantial improvements in the manuscript. The study is well presented and the findings presented are generally in line with the objective. I just have a few remaining issues that need further clarification.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Line 72. The objective of this paper is not to compare nutrient status. Please revise.

Methods: please justify the classification of food groups in the appropriate section in the methods.

Response: We re-described some related sections.

Line 242 – 250 the discussion on bio availability of iron from Zanba is too elaborate. Please be concise and refer to the low bioavailability of iron from cereals.
Response: We re-described some related sections.

Table 5. Indicate in the table which variable were significant, instead of adding footnote. Were there any tests significant at $P<0.01$ or $P<0.001$ if, so please specify using a different symbol. Specify again in the caption what test was used.

The discussion of the paper still does not compare the findings of the study with previous studies as indicated earlier. Please add a paragraph explaining how the findings compare with what is known in this population.

Response: We re-described some related sections.

Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract

Line 28. please delete “dietary”

Response: We have deleted “dietary”. (L28)

Line 31 add that you have analyses socio-economic differences. Remove the reference to the Han influence. This statement is not supported by the results.

Response: We have added and removed some related descriptions in abstract.

Line 34 State that the mothers were from surrounding areas of Lhasa, not Lhasa itself.

Response: We have stated that the mothers were from surrounding areas of Lhasa in abstract. (L34)

Line 45 abbreviate “day” as “d” as for other data

Response: We have abbreviated “day” as “d”. (L45)

Line 51 Please revise “suboptimal intakes”. The results in the abstract do not present comparison with optimal intakes.

Response: We re-describe conclusions of abstract.

Line 59 add in china so the sentence read “anemia in China”

Response: We added “anemia in China” into this sentence. (L60)
References
Some references contain the word “method” (e.g. line 63,) sometimes the author is mentioned, sometimes the number. Please be consistent and revise according to the journal style.
I don’t find the reference to the CDC in the list of reference.

Response: We have re-written this sentence.

Methods

Revise sentence because “there was not exactly Tibetan lactating mothers intake”. Did the authors mean that data on dietary intake of lactation mothers was not available? It seems this paragraph introduces the justification of the study. If so, please move it to the background section, right before the objectives.

Response: We have re-described in background. (L69-71)

Line 124. ‘in the current analysis…’ please remove this sentence here. It is already included in the result section.

Response: We removed this sentence.

Line 132 write “fitted” instead of ‘fit’

Response: We have written “fitted” instead of “fit”. (L136)


Response: We added these references. Thank you.

Line 151 Please clarify the unit of vitamin A µg or RE

Response: We clarify the unit of vitamin A.

Line 153. please write; “in the present analysis, we compare ..”

Response: We wrote in this line. (L160)
Line 157 please remove the (retinol equivalents) the abbreviation is described above

Response: We removed “retinol equivalents”. (L164)

Line 177. revise write data were not normally distributed. Please include the test used to assess normality.

Response: We re-described this “statistical analysis”.

Line 183 Please explain how and why the P value for the Wilcoxon test was adjusted. It is not clear, when was statistical significance obtained P<0.05 or P<0.017?

Response: Before we test multiple comparisons between every two subgroups, we should adjust α (α=0.05) by using Bonferroni method (α’= 2α / k (k-1), k: number of subgroups). In my case, we have 3 subgroups. Therefore, α’= 2*0.05 / 3*(3-1) =0.016666≈ 0.017

Line 191 revise ‘the mean age of the mothers’ . instead of the mean of Tibetan mothers age

Response: We changed to “the mean age of the mothers”. (L202)

Line 200. please revise as “On average 73%, 11% and 24% of the energy was originated from carbohydrates, proteins and fat respectively.

Response: We changed sentence to “On average 73%, 11% and 24% of the energy was originated from carbohydrates, proteins and fat respectively”. (L211-212)

Line 210 Introduce the fact that you analyse the ‘top 5 foods of the six dietary food groups’ in the methods.

Response: We some description in method.

Line 217. Zanba or zanba please ensure consistency

Response: We use “Zanba” and keep consistency.

Line 219 add “the“ and write “close to the nutrient”

Response: We added “the”. (L231)

Discussion
Please clarify what is meant with “basic”. Based on staple foods or cereals?

Response: We re-described this sentence. (L243)

Write “suggest” instead of “suggested”. It is a pity that the authors do not explicitly discuss which non-Tibetan Han foods have entered the diet. It would have been informative to describe this briefly in the discussion.

Response: We re-described and added some description about Han foods. (L 244-248)

I appreciated the revision from the previous paper. However to further improve this paragraph, I would suggest adding a reference to the low diversity of the diet. Dietary diversity is known to correlate with nutrient adequacy. Various good papers have been published on this topic.

Response: We added some references.

It seems to be a discussion on the limitations of the study. Please include it after the paragraph discussing the socio-economic associations.

Response: We revised some descriptions.

Nutrient biomarkers as biomarkers for nutritional status.

Response: We rephrased as “biomarkers for nutritional status”. (L306)

“impact”. From cross-sectional data, no causal links can be inferred. Refer to “associations”. The explanation is quite speculative and it would be good to substantiate it with a reference.

Response: We used “associations” and added reference.

Replace “childbearing women” with “women with children under 2”. Remove “however, our sample was random, and our data provide some useful information on the dietary intakes of Tibetan mothers with young children” this statement has no relation with the limitations on the design of the study. (Moreover, the same statement is repeated at the end of the paragraph)

Response: We changed to “women with children under 2 years old”, and removed “however, our sample was random, and our data provide some useful information on the dietary intakes of Tibetan mothers with young children”
Line 302. I still do not agree with the fact that the data show that nutrition education is a potential measure to improve dietary habits. There is a potential substantial environmental context that determines the dietary patterns to a larger extent than the education status. I would suggest arguing that the data call for more in-depth (qualitative?) studies on the causes of the dietary patterns.

Response: Of course, substantial environmental maybe very important to dietary patterns. After this cross-sectional investigation, we had conducted a nutrition education invention in rural areas surrounding Lhasa.

Table 2: indicate in the footnotes 1/ what “/” means, 2/ the way you have calculated the proportions (in a way it is clear to the reader why it does not add up to 100%) and Revise the unit of Vitamin A

Response: Because the nutrients were not normal distribution, percentage could not calculate up to 100%. We have added some explanation in table 2.

Table 3. Please revise numbering. Categories 8 and 9 for instance are not tabulated and can be removed from the list. Please ensure consistency in the way the figures in the tables are clarified in the captions. (Table 4 uses symbols, table 3 figures..)

Response: We removed categories 8 and 9 from the list.

Table 3: write “five most frequently consumed food” instead of “top five”

Response: We changed to “five most frequently consumed food”

Table 4. Please specify if the data are mean intakes per day in the footnote of the title of the table

Response: Thank you for your advice.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests: I declare that I have no competing interests