Author's response to reviews

Title: Health-promoting behaviors and social support of women of reproductive age, and strategies for advancing their health: Protocol for a mixed methods study

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Dr Melissa Norton
Editor in chief, *BMC Public Health*
BioMed Central Ltd, Floor 6, 236 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8HB, United Kingdom

Dear Dr Norton,

Thank you for your e-mail dated 22/2/2011 together with the Reviewers’ comments on the manuscript entitled, “Health-promoting behaviors and social support of women of reproductive age, and strategies for advancing their health: Protocol for a mixed methods study”. We have carefully considered the Reviewer’s comments and have addressed them in the following attachment. We have also modified parts of the manuscript, highlighted in bold, to take into account the reviewer’s concerns.

We do hope that our responses and the revised manuscript are satisfactory to you, and trust that the manuscript is now suitable for publication in the *Journal*.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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Thank you for taking time to review our manuscript. We appreciate the Reviewer’s comments. We would like to take this opportunity to address the Reviewer’s concerns as follows:

1. The background section of the manuscript is very clearly written, indicating the importance and research needs, and the major scope of the study. However, formulation of the study aims does not include specified study hypotheses, partially because of the adopted research methods but partially because the researchers have not yet elaborated the purpose in such a detailed manner that concrete hypotheses could be provided. The aims could be formulated in a greater detail in order to comprehend the major hypotheses of the study.

We appreciate the Reviewer’s comments on the background section of the manuscript. As suggested by the Reviewer, we have now explained the aims in greater detail on page 5.

2. The manuscript provides lots of details; still I have some concerns that there were some sources (e.g. Walker & colleagues 1987; Brandt & Weinert 1987) for the questionnaire study that were not included in the list of references and instead those articles discussing about the scales (Ref. No 13; and Refs. No 9 and 14) do not include considerations on all the relevant aspects of the original scales comprehensively enough. Adding all documents to the list of references, and preferably preparing an annex to show the planned items of the questionnaire - at least in its key components - would be helpful in order to make the protocol more understandable.

We have now replaced two citations (Refs. No 13 and 14) and added Refs. No 15 and 16 for the questionnaires in the list of references. Moreover, both questionnaires, HPLP II and PRQ-85-PART 2, have now been added as additional files.

3. If possible, the multi-variate methods to be used in the statistical analysis of the questionnaire-based data could be described in a greater detail. In addition to linear regression there might be alternative methods suitable for the analyses.

We agree with the Reviewer, and have considered multivariable linear regression as one of the multivariable methods. We will use multivariable linear regression analysis to predict the impact of each of the independent variables (sociodemographic variables and social support) on the dependent variable (health promoting behaviour and its subscales) and determine the variance. We have now added this point in the manuscript on page 8.

4. Yes, the writing is very clear and English is excellent.

We appreciate the Reviewer’s positive comments on our writing.