Author's response to reviews

Title: Body art practices and health risks: Awareness of the youths in the province of Naples, Italy

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer’s report
Title: Body art practices and health risks: Awareness of the youths in the province of Naples, Italy
Version: 4 Date: 1 April 2011
Reviewer: Method Kazaura
Reviewer’s report:
Re: Body art practices and health risks: Awareness of the youths in the province of Naples, Italy. (MS: 1751506534428199):
I previously raised some questions that may need responses and also I proposed what I thought was a right way regarding this manuscript. It is very sad that some of the issues were never responded to.
Consider the ‘Methods’ section:
(a) “… the first sample was composed of 23 public secondary schools, while the second sample was composed by undergraduates belonging to 7 university faculties”. How many schools were left out? Selected schools, are “because teachers’ agreement to take part in the study”. One may suspect a room for potential bias!
Yes, as stated in the previous response we have discussed them in the “Limitations of the study paragraph”.
(b) Is the ethical clearance given by Local Education Office for Campania Region, etc?? Are authors talking about ethical approval or permission to conduct the study?
Ethical approval was not required. The Local Health Authority approved the study. Both (a) and (b) points followed what was made by Cegolon et al. in a previous study published on BMC Public Health.
(c) What was the unit of analysis? An individual or the event (tattoo or piercing)? Was it not possible to find a student with a tattoo and at the same time pierced? I tried to figure out and come up with about 544 High School and 478 University students having both a tattoo and piercing. Any implications in the analysis?
Tattooed/pierced students were asked to fill the second part of the questionnaire concerning their first body modification experience. Then, further practices were not considered in the analysis.
Consider the ‘Results’ section:
I proposed that ALL tables must be reviewed for clarity and for easy interpretation. For example in Table 1:
(i) Rather than having Males and Females on a single line, the should be separated in different lines
They have been separated.
(ii) The asterisk (*) should be immediately after ‘Gender’ and not after ‘Females.
It was moved.
(iii) There are misleading proportions. For example, among high school students 910/4557 (20.0%) males were pierced as compared to 2008/4737 (42.8%) females. Wrong proportions were calculated for university students and both groups for tattoos.
Those proportion are referred to the total of pierced or tattooed subject, and not to the whole sample. Gender of the whole sample has been reported above.
(iv) Authors do not show statistical measure (and p-value) when comparing age, for example using t-test or F-test
Results of the comparison have been added.
In the middle of page 7, “The two groups differed significantly (p<0.0000001) in the number of youths who were interested in piercing or a tattooing”. We never
use significance testing for absolute figures… maybe proportions!
Proportions have been added to the text.
At the bottom of page 7 and top of page 8, there is lot of information (including significance testing) that does not appear in any of the 3 tables.
A table regarding the health risks awareness of the students has been added.
On page 9, under the discussion, “surprisingly, all the students involved responded to the questions. This may be related to the influence of the presence of their teachers while they filled the questionnaire”. Authors could have controlled this. It is not only that ALL students responded to the questionnaire, but WHAT DID THEY RESPOND under threat of their teachers?
In our opinion, the presence of the teacher or of a person from our group could have influenced only the disposition to fill in the questionnaire. At the end of the task time all the questionnaire were collected by an operator and not by the teachers. Afterwards, teachers and their students received only a feedback of aggregated results, as explained also during the presentation of the project to the students.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.