Author's response to reviews

Title: Temporal changes in the prevalence of childhood asthma and allergies in urban and rural areas of Cyprus: results from two cross sectional studies

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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The Editor, BMC Public Health

Re: Temporal changes in the prevalence of asthma and allergies in the urban and rural areas of Cyprus: results from two cross-sectional studies

Dear Editor,

We would like to thank you and the reviewers for evaluating the revised version of the above paper. We have now addressed the few remaining discretionary revision points raised by Dr De Sario. We submit a revision of the paper reflecting these minor changes which are highlighted in green in the manuscript. Below, you will also find a point-by-point response along with the relevant action. We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ourania Kolokotroni
Discretionary points for revision by Dr De Sario

1. Methods, page 10: To better understand the sensitivity analysis, since it is a post-hoc analysis, authors should explicit the reasons why the suspect selection bias had influenced study participation (i.e. low participation rate 2008)

Reply: In agreement with Dr De Sario’s suggestion, we have now amended the relevant sentence in the Methods section p. 10 which now reads as follows: “Finally, due to the lower participation rate in the 2008 survey we performed post-hoc sensitivity analyses to quantify the potential effect of selection bias on the observed estimates.”

2. Results, page 12: The sentence “As a measure of the magnitude of the change in study outcomes between the two surveys, we also report odds ratios (and 95% CI) as estimated in logistic regression models before and after adjusting for the covariates” is better located in the methods section.

Reply: In response to the above comment, we have now added the context of the above sentence to the Methods section p.9 and now reads as follows: “As a measure of the magnitude of the change in study outcomes between the two surveys, we calculated crude and adjusted odds ratios (and 95% CI) of an outcome in the 2008 as compared to the 2000 survey in multivariable logistic regression models.” In addition, the sentence in the Results section has been amended and now reads as follows: “In Table 3, we present the prevalence of asthma and allergy symptoms or lifetime disease diagnostic labeling in years 2000 and 2008 as well as unadjusted and adjusted odds ratios of the magnitude of the change in study outcomes between the two surveys.”

3. Results, page 12: The sentence “In fact, the estimates remain largely unaffected in multivariate models, suggesting that the adverse changes do not seem to be explained by the different socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in the two surveys” is better located in the discussion section.

Reply: Thank you for the suggestion to move these explanatory comments to the discussion section. We have now amended the sentence in the Results section, p.12 in order to only describe the adjusted results. The sentence now reads as follows: “Furthermore, the estimates remain largely unaffected even after adjusting for the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in the two surveys.”


Reply: Thank you for spotting this. It has now been appropriately corrected.