Author's response to reviews

Title: Factors affecting commencement and cessation of smoking behaviour in Malaysian adults

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Factors affecting commencement and cessation of smoking behaviour in Malaysian adults
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BMC Public Health

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for reviewing the manuscript above. We have addressed all the concerns raised by the reviewers and have revised the manuscript accordingly.

Attached with this letter are the point-by-point responses to all the concerns raised by the reviewers. Please review the revised manuscript, and should there be any queries, please don’t hesitate to direct it to me. I hope that this manuscript will be accepted for publication in your esteemed journal.

Thank you very much.

Best Regards

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Response to reviewer’s comments

Title: Factors Affecting Commencement and Cessation of Smoking Behaviour in Malaysian Adults

Reviewer: Abdul Rashid Ismail

Minor essential revisions

1. Data collection should be elaborated. Since the questionnaire was pre-tested, it is best to describe the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire

   • We did not put in the internal consistency and reliability data of questionnaire as this paper is an analysis of secondary data. The original study reported that pre-testing was carried out, however no data on internal consistency and reliability were provided

2. Under data collection, the definition of current smokers and a person who stopped smoking was well defined. However, under the heading of statistical analysis (Line 7-8), definition of current smokers was conflicting to definition under data collection.

   • This is a misinterpretation of words. Under the heading of statistical analysis (Line 7-8), we were trying to explain that for the analysis of smoking cessation, only current smokers were included where the event of smoking cessation was defined as a person who had stopped smoking for at least six months. To avoid the confusion, we had changed the sentence from “To identify factors related to smoking cessation, only current smokers were included in the analysis where the event was defined as the person who had stopped smoking for at least six months” to “Only current smokers were included in the analysis to identify factors related to smoking cessation. An event of smoking cessation was defined as a person who had stopped smoking for at least six months”

Discretionary revisions

3. It is worth to mention some of the campaign, strategies and policies employed by the government to encourage people to stop smoking.

   • Done, have added in discussion
Reviewer: Hai-Yen Sung

Major compulsory revision

1. Lack of essential details in method. When was the survey conducted? What are the outcome variables? What are the covariates and their definitions?
   - Done, have include the data suggested under ‘study population and survey sampling design’ and ‘statistical analysis’

2. Lack of definition of ‘smokers’ in this study. Do smokers include those who smoke regular cigarettes and those who smoke kretek or hand-rolled cigarettes such as bidi and rokok daun?
   - Smokers in this study included those who smoke cigarettes, kretek and leaf tobacco as highlighted in Table 1 and 2. The analysis was done with all the tobacco products grouped together as some of the respondents smoked more than 1 type of tobacco product concurrently

3. Authors seem to mix up the concept between ever smoking and current smoking. The percentage reported in Table 1 should refer to prevalence of ever smokers, thus the smoking prevalence reported in this study are ‘ever smoking’ rates. It is important to clarify this distinction when comparing to literature as most studies in literature reported ‘current smoking’ prevalence
   - This study was carried out to determine the factors associated with the commencement and cessation of smoking behaviour. There are two types of data analysis in this study, namely the factors associated with smoking initiation and factors associated with smoking cessation. As described in Method under ‘data collection’, for analysis purposes, in this study we included current smokers where a current smoker is defined as a person who is currently smoking or has stopped smoking for less than 6 months. Therefore, the smoking prevalence reported in this study (Table 1) is prevalence of current smokers.

4. It is inappropriate to make conclusions based on Tables 1-2 which did not control for other confounding factors
   - Done, have checked the discussion and explained that the findings are from univariate analysis where applicable

5. Tables 1-2 provide separate descriptive results for males and females without combined genders. Tables 3-4 are combined genders. It is hard to relate Tables 1-2 to Tables 3-4
• Done, have included the analyses for combined genders in Tables 1-2

Minor essential revision

1. Tables 1-2 contain many more variables than Tables 3-4. Were these other variables considered in the multivariate regression models?
   • Done, have explained the covariates for the multivariate regression models under ‘statistical analysis’

2. Sample size for ‘Orang Asli’ is too small to yield reliable estimates. Why was this group classified as a separate group?
   • We originally separated ‘Orang Asli’ as they are of different ethnicity. However, as the number is too small we have re-categorized and grouped ‘Orang Asli’ together with ‘Others’ as in the respective tables
Reviewer: Toru Nagao

Major compulsory revisions

1. Authors concluded that those who quit smoking were more likely to be regular alcohol consumers. However, it is only significant in male
• Done, have explained that univariate analysis found this association among the males only

2. Addiction to smoking is a kind of chronic disease. It would be more informative if authors discuss a role of health related personnel for future smoking cessation programs and policies

• Done, have added in discussion

Minor essential revision

3. In Table 1, please check the number of duration (year) of chewing for females; total number of subjects and number of smokers. Better check other variables too

• Done, the numbers do not add up due to missing values. Have added footnote in the tables