Author's response to reviews

Title: Acculturation and self-rated health among Arctic indigenous peoples: a population-based cross-sectional study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editors

The authors thank the referees for the very helpful and detailed feedback. We have organised our response point-by-point in accordance with the reviewers’ comments.

Reviewer's report

Title: Acculturation and self-rated health among Arctic indigenous peoples: a population-based cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 15 August 2012

Reviewer: Anne Taylor

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting and informative paper.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? - Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? - Yes

3. Are the data sound? - All limitations have been detailed

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? - Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? - Yes

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? - Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? - Not really.

Response: We have referred to a methods article previously published (Eliassen et al [45]) which explains the methods used in SLiCA. Or is this question referring to our general literature review? In that case, we hope our reference list (n=72) is exhaustive enough considering the studies published in recent years on the topic involving the relevant populations.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? - Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable? Some sentence structure and editing will be required.

• Minor Essential Revisions

1 Lacking appropriate references for some of the statements - for example

- Page 7, paragraph 2, 1st sentence;

Reference no 14, 20, and 21 are included.
- Page 13, paragraph 3, 4th sentence

The reference in red was already included in the sentence: Though we found higher education levels among women in this study, we did not find any evidence suggesting stronger effects of acculturation in men, as did not Bjerregaard et al [36] in their study on acculturation and mental health.

- Page 13, paragraph 2, 5th sentence

Reference 36 is included

2 Clumsy sentences – for example

- Page 5, paragraph 1, 4th sentence (The post-World War were characterised...)

“The post-World War II years in the Arctic was characterised by an intensification of social and cultural change in the Arctic”, changed to “The post-World War II years in the Arctic were characterised by an intensification of social and cultural change”

- Page 6, paragraph 2, 3rd sentence (drop ‘though’)

‘Though’ is dropped.

- Page 6, paragraph 2, 5th sentence (change to ..in Greenland, it was found...)

“Similarly, in a study in Greenland one found that better mental health status was associated with growing up in a town and being fully bilingual, as opposed to growing up in a small village and only speaking Greenlandic”, changed to “Similarly, in Greenland it was found that better mental
health status was associated with growing up in a town and being fully bilingual, as opposed to
growing up in a small village and only speaking Greenlandic”

- Page 6, paragraph 2, 6th sentence (change to adolescents)

Changed.

3 The results section needs re-working. The reporting of the results were
inconsistent (some but not all significant results were reported; some but not all p
values were reported)
All significant results and p-values are now reported.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being
published
All corrections suggested by the referee are included.

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a
statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
Reviewer's report

Title: Acculturation and self-rated health among Arctic indigenous peoples: a population-based cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 23 September 2012

Reviewer: Rod McCormick

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?

The author’s statement: “Exploring the relationship between acculturation and SRH in indigenous populations having experienced great societal and cultural change is thus of great importance” Could have been more explicitly stated as a research question.

Response: Considering that the populations are very different and the lack of research on acculturation among these populations, we believe that the exploratory nature of our research is appropriate.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? Yes the methods seem appropriate and well described
3. Are the data sound? The data seems sound given the limitations stated by the authors.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes, the manuscript does adhere to relevant standards for reporting and data deposition.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes, given the exploratory nature of the research.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? Yes, particularly with regards to the unstandardized nature of one of the measuring instruments (SRH). The limitations were stated in a clear and comprehensive manner.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Previous relevant work seems to be appropriately identified and acknowledged.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes.

9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes, the writing is clear and concise.

Discretionary Revisions – There is very little said about mental health which may be a result of the paucity of research amongst the three populations described in...
the study. The authors may want to make mention of some of the research conducted by authors such as Jack Hicks in Canada who examines acculturation and mental health amongst the Inuit living in the Canadian Arctic.

Response: References no 35 and 36 were used to report most of the mental health outcomes reported in the involved population. In the discussion we state on page 12 that…..”

acculturative stress and related poor health behaviours such as alcohol and substance abuse are contributing factors”. To keep the number of pages to a minimum and because SRH is a composite measure of mental and physical health, we have not discussed specific health outcomes in detail when referring to previous studies. Furthermore, we have not found much room to discuss what mental or physical health outcomes that may contribute to poor SRH.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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
ADDITIONAL CHANGES MADE (not suggested by the referees):

- Page 4, paragraph 1, sentence 2:
  Page number (p. 149) for quotation included.

- Page 4, paragraph 3, sentence 1:
  “The Íñupiat, Kalaallit and the Sami share a common, though independently unique, history of colonialism and have throughout history been victims of state and church driven strategies of forced assimilation” changed to “The Íñupiat, Kalaallit and the Sami share a common, though independently unique, history of colonialism and have throughout history been victims of state and church driven forced assimilation.”

- Page 5, paragraph 1, last sentence:
  “The role of subsistence is also affected by access to the resources traditionally harvested being reduced by climate change and an increasing number of regulations and import bans,” changed to “The role of subsistence is also affected by access to the resources traditionally harvested being reduced by climate change, pollution and an increasing number of regulations and import bans.” Reference no 25 included.

- Page 6, paragraph 2, sentence 6:
  “Spein et al found that Sami adolescence reported more smoking and drinking compared with less assimilated Sami peers”, changed to “Spein et al found that more assimilated Sami adolescents reported more smoking and drinking compared with less assimilated Sami peers.”
- Page 8, paragraph 1, last sentence:

“More detailed descriptions of the material, methods, and methodological issues in SLiCA are described in more detail elsewhere” changed to “More detailed descriptions of the material, methods, and methodological issues in SLiCA are published elsewhere.”

- Page 11, paragraph 2, sentence 2:

“Overall, no significant gender differences in the distributions of SRH, the subsistence score, or SILA were present” changed to “No significant gender differences in the distributions of SRH, the subsistence score, or SILA were present.”

- Page 13, paragraph 2, sentence 5:

“However, the observed effect of SILA was close to significant and may not be disregarded as random sampling variation” changed to “However, the observed effect of SILA in Sami men was close to significant and may not be disregarded as random sampling variation.”

- Page 13, paragraph 3, sentence 1-2: full stop(.) changed to semicolon (;)

Prior studies argue that Inuit men have to a greater extent than women experienced more problems integrating into the modern society; Inuit women have for example adapted more comfortably to higher education and wage employment [24, 57].

- Page 18, paragraph 2, sentence 3:

Reference changed from 2 to 3.
- Table 1:

The geometric mean and its 95% CI for the subsistence score was in the previous version presented by gender and region. The t-test was based on the log-transformed score as STATA discards null values when computing the geometric mean. We have however reconsidered this strategy and decided to present the arithmetic mean and to not log-transform the score, as the skewness is only about 0.2.