Author's response to reviews

Title: Clustering of health-related behaviors, health outcomes and demographics in Dutch adolescents: a cross-sectional study.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Mr. Silvestre,

First we would like to thank the Editor for his/her comments and we elaborated on them in this revised version of our paper. The feedback we received concerned that the manuscript needed to include a description on whether complex survey design features were used, whether stratified analyses were used, what the PSU was, and some elaboration on the data collection procedures. We addressed these issues along with describing the considerations of using multilevel factor analyses. We based our adjustments to the paper on discussions with three independent methodological/statistical consultants and several papers from noteworthy authors in the field. We hope the Editors agree with our response and deem it sufficient. Therefore, we added the following to the limitations: “One of the limitations that have to be taken into account is the lack of integrating a multilevel structure in the factor and cluster analyses. For more optimal estimates such an approach is ideally preferred, although such approaches are still in their infancy. However, given the strong factor loadings and strong effects that were found, it is highly unlikely that the impact of integrating a multilevel structure would have significantly changed them. As stated in previous research, such effects are especially to be expected and relevant when the variables that are dealt with are cross-level latent constructs. This means that if one were to measure higher level constructs (e.g. school climate) via individual level measurements that such a design would definitely need a multilevel approach. However, this was not the case in the current study and therefore such approaches were less relevant. Also, due to fear of becoming a too complex statistical undertaking that might undermine the public health message of the article, it focused on individual students as the primary sampling units to study and make inferences on.”

Also, we elaborated more on the inclusion of participants, the representativeness of our sample and the process of responding and response rates of the students. This was integrated into the Methods section.

Concluding, my co-authors and I were wondering whether it is true that our paper has not been under review at this time (approx. 5 months after submission)? Can you please tell us when we can expect a decision to be made?

With kind regards, also on behalf of all my co-authors,

Vincent Busch,