Author's response to reviews

Title:A cross-sectional pilot study of the Scottish Early Development Instrument: A tool for addressing inequality

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Version:4 Date:29 November 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear BMC Public Health Editors

Re: MS: 1239534149907168 - A cross-sectional pilot study of the Scottish Early Development Instrument: A tool for addressing inequality

Thank you for your correspondence. We thank the reviewers for their comments. The following changes have been made to the above paper:

Page 1 - word count; the abstract is 343 and the main body 3980 words.

Page 2 – Abstract; in line 8 of background ‘at a reasonable cost’ removed, and line 2 of results ‘and affordable’ removed as recommended by reviewer 2.

Page 14 – ‘At £10,000 annualized cost, this is very affordable for the average Local Authority’ has been replaced by

‘Thus, for the average Local Authority the annualized cost would be £10,000’.

Page 17 (bottom) and page 17 (top), 2nd last paragraph at end of Discussion –

‘The SEDI uses proxy-respondents (teachers) hence reporting bias is a potential limitation of the study’

has been removed and replaced by a paragraph referring to the literature on proxy respondents which reviewer 2 has alerted us to. The new paragraph is as follows:

‘The SEDI uses teachers’ ratings of aspects of children’s development hence reporting bias is a potential limitation of the study. A vast body of literature exists which considers proxy versus direct assessment of child development and wellbeing. Reviews of child wellbeing assessment using Health-Related Quality-of-Life (HR-QOL) instruments considered parent-provided and self-rated approaches. In several studies a high correlation was shown for ‘observable’ components such as physical, and a low correlation for non-directly observable components such as emotional or social areas [34, 35]. Frameworks have been developed to delineate between various proxy perspectives and to guide inquiries into the validity and interpretation of viewpoints [36]. The age of children has been found to have a moderating function on the closeness of correspondence [35]. In fact, 5-year-old children have been found unable to understand a sufficient number of items to describe their health adequately [37].

The EDI assesses physical, cognitive, emotional and social aspects of children 4-6 years. Reliability testing…….’

Page 17 – Conclusion; ‘low cost’ has been removed.
Page 22, 23 - References; four new references (numbers 34 to 37) have been added for the new paragraph at the end of Discussion.

We do hope that these changes are adequate and thank the reviewers again for their useful insights.

Sincerely

Dr Rosemary Geddes