Author's response to reviews

Title: Patterns and Determinants of Breastfeeding and complementary Feeding Practices of Emirati Mothers in the United Arab Emirates

Authors:

Hadia Dr Radwan (zjaziri@eim.ae)

Version: 2 Date: 1 November 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS’ COMMENTS

Please note that we have marked the reviewers’ comments in italics and my responses in bold.

**Replies to comments of the reviewer1**

**Reviewer:** Suneth Agampodi

1. *The manuscript submitted was not according to the guidelines provided. Abstract was missing from the manuscript file and there were highlighted areas.*

The manuscript has been modified according to the guidelines and the Abstract was added.

2. *In the introduction, better to include the present state of breastfeeding promotion (it is already there, but need more) in UAE.*

More information about breastfeeding status in UAE has been added to the introduction.

3. *Methods are inadequate. Sampling technique is not clear. How did you recruit mothers from the 4 randomly selected clinics. Even though it was mentioned that the sampling procedure was convenient, it needs further explanation.*

More description of the sampling technique was added to the methodology section.

4. *What was the rationale for selecting 200 from each city?*

The sampling technique and rationale was clarified in the methodology section.

5. *Who collected data and what was the method use for recall. Was it only the recall? At 2 years of age, effect of recall bias on exclusive breastfeeding could be substantial. This issue needs to be discussed thoroughly in the discussion.*

The author collected all the data. The infant’s age and weight were recorded from the infant’s medical record. The questionnaire was used to collect the data. The recall and selection bias as limitations for the study was mentioned in the discussion.

6. *Discussion is too long a repetition of results. More focused discussion with that is interesting for international readership is recommended.*

The discussion section has been rewritten and shortened.
7. The sampling procedure is not a probability sampling and it does not allow generalization of results. This need to be discussed as a limitation.

The representation and generalization of the results limitation has been discussed in the discussion section.

8. Use of weaning and complimentary feeding - Please use the standard definitions

The “weaning” word has been replaced by “complimentary feeding”.

Replies to comments of the reviewer 2

Reviewer: Colin Binns

1. In the methods state exactly the type of study. This is a cross sectional study using a convenience sample of mothers with infants aged 0-2 years.

The methodology section and sampling of data has been rewritten.

“Almost exclusive breastfeeding” – this term should not be used, but should be included under “predominant breastfeeding”

Definitions of breastfeeding have been modified to the new WHO indicators.

3. Use more conventional definitions for education eg. don’t state “Mothers ….were moderately educated (53.5%).” Use a more conventional classification such as
• Eg completed primary school
• completed high school
• Completed higher education

The classifications of the mother’s education have been modified as requested by the reviewer.

4. “primi,” Don’t use unintelligible abbreviations - use the full spelling

Full spelling “primiparus” has replaced the abbreviation “primi”.

5. Give some indication of the validity of the sample. This sample has LBW 14.8% and Males 58.2%. Is this typical of Dubai births?
Chisquare analysis was done and results added to the table for validation of data.

6. “About three quarters (73%) of the mothers stated that they did not give their infants any fluids except breast milk during their stay at the hospital,” Does this include water? Were they given any fluids by hospital staff?

Yes, it included water and no fluids were provided by hospital staff.

7. “Although the majority of Emirati mothers, in this study, breastfed their infants, only 25% of them were exclusively breastfed” . Always state at what time when referring to Exclusive Breastfeeding.

The time of exclusive breastfeeding was added to the sentence as” 25% of them were exclusively breastfed for less than six months.”

8. Being a cross sectional study the length of recall varies. To provide some measure of reliability of recall a comparison should be made by grouping into 3 or 4 different lengths of recall and compare basic results eg rate of prelacteal feeds

The recall bias was mentioned in the limitation and how it was minimized by the author.

9. Statistical analysis is not adequately described. The preferable way of analysis of cross sectional breastfeeding data is by survival analysis using a synthetic cohort approach.

Logistic analysis and multiple logistic analysis was done following the design of the study.