Author's response to reviews

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

Authors:

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Version: 3 Date: 22 December 2012

Author's response to reviews: see over
Replies to comments of the reviewer: Suneth Agampodi

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

1. Abstract need to be edited. Please see the attached manuscript with Comments

   -The comments in the Abstract were addressed and modified as requested by the reviewer.

2. In methods, sampling procedure is still not clear. The revised manuscript status that a proportionate sample was used, but it was 200 from each selected clinic!

   The no. of Emirati mothers visiting the clinics were somewhat similar and 200 sample size was calculated by the statistician as the required no of sample size to account for dropouts and non respondents.

3. In results, no need to repeat all details in tables and figures. Please remove unnecessary text.

   Some texts were removed from results

4. Table number 4,6 and seems not essential for this manuscript.

   Tables 4,6 were removed from text as requested by the reviewer.

There are several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results of this study. One important limitation of this study is recall bias due to the retrospective nature of the data collection, possibly resulting in over or under estimation of actual breastfeeding practices. Although recall biases cannot be avoided, the author conducted all interviews to ensure consistent technique and interpretation of the answers. It should be also noted that epidemiological studies of this kind do not establish causality but may suggest associations.

Another limitation of this study is the representation of all the Emirati women who had babies and breastfeeding during the period of research. The generalisability of the
results is limited by the element of convenience sampling – samples were drawn at the MCH and PHC clinics, which increase the likelihood of some types of people being selected rather than others. However, (a) strong attempts were made to match the demographic characteristics of the general population of mothers, and (b) a large proportion (more than 90%) of Emirati mothers do use the clinics for following up with the vaccination programs of their infants, as required by the Ministry of Health.

Replies to comments of the reviewer : Colin Binns

Please note that we have marked the reviewer’s comments in italics and my responses in bold(uppercase).

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.

THIS ISSUE HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED. USING A CONVENIENCE SAMPLE THAT APPEARS TO BE BIASED MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO GENERALISE FROM THE RESULTS

-THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH(p.20 para3) IS ADDRESSING THE LIMITATION OF REPRESENTATION:

“Another limitation of this study is the representation of all the Emirati women who had babies and breastfeeding during the period of research. The generalisability of the results is limited by the element of convenience sampling – samples were drawn at the MCH and PHC clinics, which increase the likelihood of some types of people being selected rather than others. However, (a) strong attempts were made to match the demographic characteristics of the general population of mothers, and (b) a large proportion (more than 90%) of Emirati mothers do use the clinics for following up with the vaccination programs of their infants, as required by the Ministry of Health. ”

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.

THIS MAY OF COURSE BE TRUE BUT NO EVIDENCE IS PROVIDED TO SUPPORT SUCH AN UNLIKELY ANSWER

-THE MOTHERS WERE ASKED IF THEY THEIR INFANTS HAD BEEN GIVEN ANY FLUIDS,EVEN WATER, DURING THEIR HOSPITAL STAY AND THE PERCENTAGE REPRESENTED THEIR ANSWERS. WHAT EVIDENCE IS NEEDED FOR THIS PERCENTAGE?
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.”

TIME HAS STILL NOT BEEN STATED ACCURATELY.

-WHEN INDICATING EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING, IT IS ALWAYS WRITTEN AS EITHER EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING FOR 4 MONTHS OR FOR SIX MONTHS. SO THE SENTENCE IS WRITTEN AS “25% of them were exclusively breastfed for 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.

RECALL IS MENTIONED IN THE DISCUSSION SECTION(P20 PARA2):
“One important limitation of this study is recall bias due to the retrospective nature of the data collection, possibly resulting in over or under estimation of actual breastfeeding practices. Although recall biases cannot be avoided, the author conducted all interviews to ensure consistent technique and interpretation of the answers. It should be also noted that epidemiological studies of this kind do not establish causality but may suggest associations”

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

NOT DONE

-Many published breastfeeding researches have done logistic analysis. Survival analysis was not included in this research study design.