Author's response to reviews

Title: Exploring Diabetes Burden in Mongolia Through a National Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Survey

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Reviewers,

We thank you for your valued feedback. The time and effort taken by you to review and provide feedback on our work is highly appreciated.

Below are our responses.

Warm regards and thanks,

Author Group.

Reviewer 1:

Title: The first part of the title “exploring diabetes burden” creates the expectation that the article will present data on the burden of diabetes (incidence, prevalence, diabetes related morbidity and mortality). This reviewer suggests rewording the title to exclude this phrase. One suggestion: Exploring Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Related to Diabetes in Mongolia: A National Population Based Survey. Thank you. Updated.

Abstract:

Minor essential revisions

1. In the last sentence of the methods section the authors use “general” and “generally.” Using both words in the same sentence is awkward, and the sentence actually might read better without either. This same phrasing is used elsewhere in the paper and should also be corrected. Amended throughout

Major compulsory revisions

2. The first sentence of the Results section mentions the correlation between burden of disease and low knowledge levels. However, the data presented does not examine burden of disease (incidence, prevalence, etc). The Results section needs to focus exclusively on the results from this analysis of this particular dataset. This has been removed as it did, indeed, create confusion. Thank you.

3. Conclusions: The final sentence requires clarification. What are these groups? Removing this sentence all together and concluding with the recommendation in the second sentence for increased health education would make a stronger conclusion. Thank you, it has been removed.

Introduction:
Minor essential revisions

1. The first paragraph includes the phrase Low and Middle Income Countries and specifies the acronym LMIC, since this is not used anywhere else in the paper I would not include the acronym. This was removed.

2. In the second paragraph I would reword the first sentence “Diabetes is no longer only a disease of the rich, old, and sedentary”. Updated, thank you.

3. I would also specify the second half of the second sentence as “the majority of these deaths occur...”. Also amended.

4. In the third paragraph the “respectively” construction of the second sentence is awkward and I recommend either breaking this sentence into two sentences or reworking it. This has been split and clarified.

5. The use of the word “information” twice in the last sentence of the 4th paragraph is redundant. I suggestion removing the second occurrence of the word. Removed, thank you.

Methods:

Minor essential revisions

1. The last sentence of the 4th paragraph needs to be revised including the use of general and generally in the same sentence. I suggest rewording the last half to “practices around NCDs and their risk factors, and then a more vertical approach explored individual disease knowledge, attitudes, and practices.” Amended.

2. Be sure to consistently use past tense when describing what was done, but present tense when describing what is presented in the paper e.g. “the most common five are reported in the paper. Thank you, this has been checked and updated.

3. The use of the words “explore”, and “exploring” in this section and the results section is awkward. I suggest limiting the use of this term and the related sentence constructions throughout the paper. Thank you.

4. For the data analysis I believe that p>0.05 is a typo and should be p<0.05, also please state whether one or two sided tests were used. Yes, this was amended.

5. Covariables should be covariates. Amended.

Major compulsory revisions

6. Nowhere in the Methods section is the case made for separating Table 1 or Figure 1 by sex. Please explain why this was done. An addition has been made to the methods section. During recruitment, there was a non-purposeful oversampling of females as compared to males. Data was therefore weighted and analyses and where appropriate, disaggregation by gender has been undertaken. We have added some census data to illustrate the small oversampling that occurred, as an appendix.
Results:

Minor essential revisions

1. Starting each section of this section with “Exploring...” or “in order to explore” is unnecessary. I would remove these introductory sentences and merge these paragraphs. Thank you, this was indeed clunky. It has been revised.

Major compulsory revisions

2. Please provide in the Methods section an explanation for why the sample was separated by sex in Table 1 and Figure 1. Sex certainly appears to be associated with the outcomes, but so do the other demographic characteristics. Thank you, please see above. Also, based on other similar publications in this journal we felt this was an appropriate layout for demographic data.

3. I would only have one paragraph per Table. There are four paragraphs describing the data in Table 1 and nearly as many for Table 2. This has been amended - combined or reduced.

4. This reviewer does not understand why in Table 1 the percentages for the male and female columns are percentages of the total as opposed to column percentages (e.g. percent of females 15-24 years old). Please explain this choice. Thank you, this has been changed as per your suggestion and now presents much more clearly.

5. When describing the age distribution the authors state that the majority of participants were 15-24 years old. In fact it appears that an approximately similar percentage were 25-34 and 35-44. A truer statement might be that the majority of participants were <45 years old (around 80% were <45 years old by my calculations). This has been corrected.

6. Also, the use of confidence intervals for percentages needs to be consistent between the tables and the text. If these are not included in the tables do not include them in the text. When discussing barriers to prevention methods on page 14, the last sentence stating that “this association was independently significant” is not supported by any of the data that is presented. If an analysis was run that would support this statement please include it in the results section. Thank you, these have been removed as not to create confusion.

7. Information regarding how questions were asked (e.g. Barriers to prevention methods were then explored, with participants being asked open-ended questions) belongs in the Methods section. This has been removed.

Discussion: Major compulsory revisions

1. The first paragraph only presents data on diabetes burden among males in Mongolia. Please contrast this with data on females. It seems based on the second paragraph that the point is to link low levels of knowledge among males and urban dwellers with the high risk of diabetes in these groups. This concept needs to be more clearly stated. Thank you, this has been clarified and reads more clearly now.
2. Including the comparison to India in the fourth paragraph is confusing. This has been clarified and updated.

3. The fifth paragraph seems to imply that screening and education are similar constructs. While these are related I would be more explicit regarding the potential connections. This has been removed and clarified.

4. Removing the last two paragraphs of the conclusion would strengthen this section. The final two sentences of the first paragraph should be re-worded into a single sentence. This was an appreciated suggestion and has been amended accordingly.

REVIEWER 2

Minor Essential Revisions:

The manuscript needs to be read for grammar as there are a number of areas where the text spacing is poor and words are joined. Thank you, this has been amended. This was an error created in the uploading of the manuscript and we apologise for this technical issue and the difficulties it would have caused in reviewing.