Author’s response to reviews

Title: Changes in the Determinants of Exclusive Breastfeeding in Nepal: Comparison of National Surveys 2006 and 2011

Authors:

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
To

The Chief Editor

BMC Public Health


Dear Chief Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a revised version of our manuscript. On behalf of my co-authors Kay Sauer and Yun Zhao please find attached our revised manuscript of an original article entitled “Changes in the Determinants of Exclusive Breastfeeding in Nepal: Comparison of National Surveys 2006 and 2011”. Based on one of the reviewer’s suggestions, we have changed the title from the original submission to “Exclusive Breastfeeding Practices in Relation to Social and Health Determinants: A comparison of the 2006 and 2011 Nepal Demographic and Health Surveys”.

We have provided a point to point response to the reviewers’ concerns and made revision as appropriate. I have attached a summary of these revisions. We would like to thank you and the reviewers for your time and allowing us to resubmit manuscript for further review.

Sincerely yours,

Vishnu KHANAL
Email: Khanal.vishnu@gmail.com
Responses to Reviewer 1: Kath Ryan

1. The Tables are numerous, large and a bit hard to navigate. They include a lot of data that turned out to be insignificant and the significant data is repeated in the text. Could the Tables be collapsed to important and significant data only?

   Author response: We have now removed the non significant independent variables from the table so that the tables are clear to navigate. (p.25-30)

2. The paper needs to be proof read and corrected by a native English speaker as sometimes the sense is lost.

   Author response: Paper is extensively proof read by one of the author for English who is a native speaker. We believe that it now is presented in a more concise use of English.

3. Please cite the original WHO documents recommending exclusive breastfeeding rather than secondary texts.

   Author response: We have made the revision accordingly. (page 4, Paragraph 1)

4. Page 12, penultimate sentence - Please remove "properly" so that it reads "...health workers assist mothers by providing knowledge and skills to breastfeed."

   Author response: We have made the revision accordingly. (Page 14, Paragraph 1)

5. Page 13 - the Hindu ceremony of Pasni is mentioned including instructions from priest about the introduction of solids but there is no suggestion that the education of the priests might help with EBF. Would this be possible?

   Author response: We appreciate this suggestion and have added few sentences in the text now regarding this. (page 14, paragraph 3)

6. The final sentences talk about husbands and wives. Please make it fathers and spouses or mothers.

   Author response: We revised the final paragraph as suggested by both reviewers.

Reviewer 2: Sarah Filoche
Would consider a change in title. Suggest:

**Exclusive breastfeeding practices in relation to social and health determinants: A comparison of the 2006 and 2011 Nepal Demographic and Health Surveys.**

**Author response:** We agree with the reviewer that this is a better title. Title has been changed according to the reviewer’s suggestion. (Page 1)

### Major Compulsory Revisions

Overall: Additional description of the outcome measures and exposure variables is needed. Clarify primary and secondary outcomes. Power calculations? How has missing data been handled (note on Tables also needed)

**Author response:**
- A separate paragraph has been added to describe the outcome and explanatory variables (Page 7, outcome variable; page 8, independent variables).
- We have now added power calculation based on assumption of our study (page 5, sample size).

### Minor Essential Revisions

Overall:
- Replace children with infants throughout
  **Author response:** This have been amended as suggested.
- Check the use of rate, more accurate to use proportion.
  **Author response:** This has been change throughout the manuscript as appropriate.
- Ensure consistent use of **comparison of two surveys between 2006 and 2011** -rather than between 2006 and 2011 as it implies that the study is a longitudinal one.
  **Author response:** This Change has been made as suggested.
- Check for double spacing (could use paragraph button, or find and replace);
  **Author response:** Change has been made as suggested.
- Replaced & with and throughout the manuscript consistency of and and & and abbreviation order. replaced & with and throughout the manuscript
  **Author response:** Change has been made as suggested.

### Abstract
1. Rephrasing for clarity and ease of reading
   
   **Author response:** This has been revised as suggested.

2. An advantage of this study is including the father’s perspective which needs highlighting.
   
   **Author response:** Thank you for suggesting this important change. It has been included and we have also included it in the conclusion section of abstract (Page 2)

3. Clarify the objectives. Not for children, rather the mother’s perspective, the outcome measure is the proportion of children being EBF up to 6 months of age. The exposure variables are…
   
   **Author response:** revised accordingly. (Page 2, paragraph 1)

4. Need to add determinants, or at least key examples.
   
   **Author response:** We have included these in both the introduction and in the conclusion of the abstract (Page 2, paragraph 5: page 3).

5. Delete spacing and then change year to years
   
   **Author response:** revised accordingly.

6. Change to the EBF rates were higher in 2011 compared 2006 (it is not a multiple repeated measure, as you are not sure what happened in the intervening years).
   
   **Author response:** revised accordingly (Page 2; paragraph 5)

7. Delete which to live births part of last sentence, as it is not measurable in current study and an overstatement
   
   **Author response:** Thank you for noting this. We have deleted the sentences from the conclusion so that it reflects the finding only from the current study only.

**Background:**
Rationale for including men’s information to be included in the study.

**Author response:** Few sentences are added in the background (Page 4, paragraph 2).

8. Clarify the objectives, outcome measures. Not a rate measure, rather changes in proportions/numbers
9. Define MDGs
   **Author response:** Revised accordingly (Page 4, the last sentence)

10. Change essential to important
    **Author response:** Revised accordingly

11. Remove paragraph on media influences to discussion if relevant to discuss results in relation to this.
    **Author response:** We have removed it from the background variable and also form the tables as these were not significant. This was also one of suggestions from reviewer 1 to delete non significant variable when there are not important.

12. Change between 2006 to 2011 to …EBF in 2006 compared to 2011
    **Author response:** We have revised the objective so that it read clear (page 4).

**Methods**

Needs more description and referencing over all.

**Author response:** We have expanded the description and references see yellow highlighted passage of text.

13. Clarify what instruments are. Study instruments: Explain. Expand on information for women and men’s information.
    **Author response:** We have added few sentences to explain the content of the women's and men’s questionnaire. (Page 5; paragraph 1)

14. Change to make it uniform, to, for consistency
    **Author response:** Few sentences are added after the description of the instrument. (page 5, first paragraph)

15. How were the questionnaires validated? Example of questions asked.
    **Author response:** We have added more details about the questionnaires after the description of the instrument. (page 5 first paragraph)

Data extraction and analysis: Needs title change, data extraction not discussed.

**Author response:** Title is now changed to Data analysis. (page 6, sub-heading)

16. What is the odds ratio adjusted for? 17. What are the confounders?
Author response: We have now added the factors controlled in multiple logistic regression model and highlighted it. (Page 10, paragraph 2)

18. References, particularly for the backward elimination and further explanation

Author response: Changed accordingly.

Definition of variables

19. Delete space between breastfeeding and among, and use EBF

Author response: Changed accordingly. (Page 7)

20. Question whether ethnicity is linked to what appears to be an SES status. What is this classification based on? Reference?

Author response: Ethnicity is based on caste system of Nepal (ref. Bennet Dahal et al. 2008; Pandey et al. 2013). We have now added the references in the starting sentence of ethnicity. (Page: 8)

Results:

--Remove all reference of Table explains, and change to, describes.

Author response: changed accordingly

--Explain throughout what factors were controlled for.

Author response: Revised accordingly

--Consistent use of & and and in parentheseses and elsewhere, remove & and use and

Author response: Revised accordingly

21. Delete the word spacing between births

Author response: Revised accordingly

22. Sentence from thus to on EBF to be removed as is discussion of results.

Author response: Revised accordingly (Page 12, paragraph 1)
23. Change It motivated us, to these results led to the development of another regression model…delete with an aim to get a further insight, and change to, to determine the association…

**Author response:** Revised accordingly. (page 12, paragraph 2)

24. Delete the sentence, a more accurate rate of EBF as this is Discussion.

**Author response:** Statement removed as requested

**Discussion:**
--An introductory sentence is needed to summarise what was done for the study and results.

**Author response:** The second paragraph of the discussion has included a statement about what was done followed by the study results (page 13, paragraph 2).

--Rephrasing of concluding statements, as overstated e.g. This presents a major challenge. Better to state – Our findings suggest that achieving the WHO/UNICEF of EBF for six months is challenging.

**Author response:** revised accordingly (Page 13, paragraph 2).

25. Add benefits to long term.

**Author response:** revised accordingly (Page 12)

26. Delete the benefits of EBF are well known.

**Author response:** revised accordingly

27. Better to state that EBF confers protection against, and remove crucial in protecting infants from

**Author response:** revised accordingly (page 12)

28. Overstatement…that can be attributable, change can to could in part be. Delete positive. Delete last sentence of this paragraph as already stated.

**Author response:** revised accordingly which reflects the condition of Nepal in terms of infant mortality (Page 13, paragraph 1)

29. Highlight the fact that father’s perspective is novel. Bring to the forefront more, without overstating.

**Author response:** Thank you we have revised accordingly (page 14 paragraph 2)

30. Significant predictors of what? Length of infant being EBF?
Author response: Revised accordingly (page 14, paragraph 2)

31. Obesity needs to be in a separate paragraph and discussed in relation to results, if relevant, this reviewer questions the relevance of this section. Are women in the present study overweight?

Author response: The paragraph is separated as advised. A total of 7.3% in 2006 and 11.2% mothers were overweight/obese in this study (table 2). (Page 15, paragraph 3)

Conclusions:

32. Delete during, and replace with, in both 2006 and 2011. Consider deleting the sentence starting therefore all breastfeeding programs or explain further

Author response: This has been revised accordingly (page 17, paragraph 2)

33. Change breastfed to breastfeed

Author response: Revised the structure of sentences throughout.

34. Delete space between that and the

Author response: revised accordingly

35. Change were to was, in expected to follow

Author response: revised accordingly (page 17, paragraph 2)

36. Rephrase sentence, It should be noted that mother-in-laws…to something like, Older women in Nepalese communities, such as the mother-in-laws, generally have low levels of formal education…..therefore breastfeeding promotion programs….would benefit from including this demographic in these programs. Why is this strategy more likely to prevent early cessation in EBF among the male infants?

Author response: revised accordingly. The male infant part is removed from the sentence. (Page 17, paragraph 3)

37. Last sentence, would suggest changing to something like: The results from this study has highlighted some key social determinants for the continuation of EBF to six months and beyond, which would warrant further investigation.

Author response: revised accordingly. (page 18)

Tables

38. Check tables for grammar and sentence construction.
Author response: revised accordingly

39. Change rate to proportion for all relevant. And 40. Check appropriate use of N vs n in all Tables

Author response: revised accordingly

Table 1 legend, remove among under, and replace with, in infants 5 months of age and under by…. 

Author response: Replaced the phrase “among infants under six months” by “in infants 5 months of age and under” for all tables’ title

41. Check Ethnicity, explain how it is by advantage.

Author response: We have added description of advantage or disadvantage in the description of explanatory variable.

Table 2 legend, as Table 1. Suggest change to: Proportion (%) of exclusive breastfeeding in infants 6 months of age and under by select health indicators and obstetric outcomes. Modify in main text also as appropriate.

Author response: Changed to: Table 2 Proportion (%) of exclusive breastfeeding in infants 5 months of age and under by health related characteristics, Nepal 2006 (N=482) and 2011 (N=224)

Change:

42. Birth order to Parity (and in main text with explanation),

Author response: Revised accordingly

43. Time between birth events

Author response: we retained it as birth interval

44. Type of pregnancy to Plurality

Author response: Revised accordingly (Page 27).

45. Add unit of size of infant

Author response: Revised accordingly. It is the size of infants as perceived by mothers—there is no unit of measurement.

46. Define pre-lacteal feed in text

Author response: Revised accordingly (Page 6, paragraph 3)

47. Explain Time wanted. Unit of Anaemia measure. ANC abbreviation? Add

Author response: We have added the description in variable section and highlighted it in yellow for your review.
48. Move Frequency of reading a newspaper, watching television and listening to radio to Table 1

**Author response:** Based on the reviewer 1 comment, we deleted these variables as they were not significant.

Table 3 and 4 Further information of the legend is needed. Would question whether excluding non-significant results is appropriate for this study.

**Author response:**

Including in multiple analyses only those variables that are statistically significant in univariate analysis is a common biostatistical practice. We understand concerns that there might be a chance to miss some statistically significant determinants as some variables not significant in univariate analysis may become significant in multivariable analysis. However, please note statistical significant is not necessarily important in clinical or public health applications. For the analysis of many independent variables such in our data, restricting the p value <0.05 facilitates the focus on only the important variables under study.

Table 5. Further information of the legend is needed.

**Author response:** Table 5 Comparison of the determinants of exclusive breastfeeding in infants 5 months of age and under between 2006 and 2011, Nepal. We have placed further detail of the models at the end of table. Likewise, in the methodology section, we have explained to make it clear.

Table 6. Reword legend, suggest: Changes in the proportions of exclusively breastfed infants by significant social and health indicator determinants.

**Author response:** reivsed accordingly : Table 6. Changes in the proportions of exclusively breastfed infants by significant social and health determinants (Page 35)

49. Change no previous birth to parity status.

**Author response:** We have retained the birth interval to reflect spacing. By doing so, if we use parity status as zero (0), it will create confusion for reader.

Table 7 Change prevalence to proportion

**Author response:** reivsed accordingly