Author's response to reviews

Title: Child maltreatment and hypertension among young adults

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Prof Latkin,

We very much appreciate the continued interest in our manuscript and the opportunity to respond to the comments from the reviewers. As requested we have responded to the reviewers comments and provide details of our point-by-point response below, showing the reviewers comments in italics followed by our response in normal font.

**Reviewer: Jodi Ford**

(1) Page 4 end of first paragraph, the authors state "Previous research has documented that women may be more likely to cope with stress by exhibiting behaviors that are obesogenic, which may contribute to elevated blood pressure, while men may be more likely to cope by expressing non-obesity promoting behaviors.[13] ". The authors may want to provide some examples of non-obesity promoting behaviors in parentheses.

We have revised this sentence to note that men may be more likely to engage in behaviors that promote elevated blood pressure, such as alcohol consumption and smoking, as a way to cope with stress in comparison to women, page 4, first paragraph.

(2) Discussion section: The first sentence is in a paragraph by itself-- is this intentional or was there spacing issues with the second paragraph?

We have combined the first and second paragraphs of the discussion into one paragraph.

**Reviewer: David Bennett**

1. On p. 9 the authors report that “Women who experienced sexual abuse had a higher prevalence of hypertension (17% vs. 14%) compared to those who did not.” I assume that this was a significant difference, although no p value is reported. Also, in the notes to Figure 1 it is stated that “No statistically significant differences were noted between type of child maltreatment and hypertension”, which would appear to conflict with the text on p.9.

The prevalence of hypertension among women who reported sexual abuse vs. those who did not (17% vs 14%) was not statistically significant; we have noted this in the text to avoid confusion.

2. The authors state on p. 11 that the effect size for the relationship between
sexual abuse and hypertension did not change after controlling for obesity, physical activity, smoking and alcohol consumption. Is this literally true that there was no change - I would think that the effect size would have decreased slightly given that the PR dropped from 1.43 to 1.35.

It is true that the PR dropped from 1.43 to 1.35 but we are considering this not to be a meaningful change, we do state in that same sentence that the PR was no longer statistically significant after adjusting for the above mentioned factors.

3. On p. 12 the authors refer to the limitation of using a yes/no characterization of “violence exposure”, apparently referring to their child maltreatment assessments. Given that neglect does not typically involve “violence exposure”, using the term “child maltreatment” would be more appropriate here.

We agree and have made the change to use the term “child maltreatment”, discussion section pages 11 and 12.

4. The authors sometimes refer to “sex differences”, other times to “gender differences”. Given the distinction between the terms, it would be helpful for the authors to select the most appropriate term for their study (presumably gender differences if sexual identity was self-reported) and to use it consistently throughout the manuscript.

We apologize for the inconsistent use of terminology. We have edited the manuscript to consistently use the term ‘sex differences’.

5. On a minor note, the authors begin a sentence “Lastly” in the first paragraph of p. 12, followed by another sentence with “Finally” later in the same paragraph. Also, adding asterisks to denote significant findings in Table 2 would more readily allow readers to identify significant findings.

We have replaced the word “lastly” in the first paragraph of page 12 with “Third” as we are enumerating the limitation of the study. We have also added asterisks to Table 2 to denote statistical significance.