Author's response to reviews

Title: Development and validation of a tool to assess the physical and social environment associated with physical activity among adults in Sri Lanka.

Authors:

Shreenika H De silva weliange (shreenika73@yahoo.co.uk)
Dulitha Fernando (dulithafernando@hotmail.com)
Jagath Gunathilake (aajkg@yahoo.com)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Editor in Chief
BMC Public Health

Dear Sir/ Madam,

RE: SUBMISSION OF A PAPER TITLED “DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF A TOOL TO ASSESS THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATED WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG ADULTS IN SRI LANKA”

Thank you for the comments given for the above manuscript. Given below are the point by point description of the changes made and answers to some of the queries.

Referee 1:
Minor essential revisions: Back ground, Para 4: corrected.

Major compulsory revisions:
1. The tool was developed in the district of Colombo which has urban as well as rural sectors. Therefore, the authors feel that it could be used especially in the urban parts of other districts of Sri Lanka. This tool like any other tool measuring the environment, need to be assessed for validity and reliability in that particular setting/ area. As this was developed using Sri Lankan population the authors feel that it is justifiable to retain the title as “Development and validation of a tool to assess the physical and social environment associated with physical activity among adults in Sri Lanka”

2. This instrument does not assess the amount of physical activity. The tool I have used to assess physical activity in the rest of the study was the International Physical activity questionnaire long version which assesses activity in the domains of occupation, household, work related and leisure. This tool only assesses the physical and social environment associated with physical activity. Therefore this tool can be used to describe the physical and social environment associated with physical activity in a developing country context after validating to that specific area and can also be described to assess the environment factors associated with physical activity in an individual. The statement can be considered relevant as identification of factors can be used to develop tailored intervention if the environment factors were found to be associated with physical activity. These interventions might be modification of the environment.

3. The factor structure was almost similar in males and females and was consistent with the overall factor structure. In the females however, the vehicular traffic safety and safety were loaded as one factor. All other factors (infrastructure for walking, aesthetics and facilities for cycling, access and connectivity, recreational facility for physical activity, social cohesion and social acceptance) retained their individuality. Therefore the authors decided to retain the model with the 8 factor structure as the final model taking into consideration the important nature of the two factors. It was seen to be justifiable to retain the “combined factor structure for both females and males” as the final structure.
Referee 2:
The word in text line 237 and 239 should be Eigen values and not “given”.

Editorial comments:
The authors felt that the final version of the Physical and social environment Scale and the scoring guidelines would be made available to interested readers on request to the authors. This is due to availability of all the items in the principal component analysis table and due to the length of the PASES and its scoring protocol. However if the editor feel that the scale and the scoring guidelines are a must requirement it could be made available with reference to it on the main text. Please be kind enough to let me know, so that I could make that adjustment if needed.

I would be extremely grateful if you could accept this paper so that it can contribute to the work carried out on physical activity and environment.

Thank you
Yours sincerely

Dr. A.A.S.H. De Silva Weliange
Lecturer
Department of Community Medicine,
Faculty of Medicine
University of Colombo.