Author's response to reviews

Title: Asian-White Differences in Short Sleep Duration by Industry of Employment and Occupation in the US: A Cross-sectional Study

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Version: 4 Date: 26 April 2014

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April 26, 2014

William R. Brieger, DrPH, MPH
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Dear Dr. Brieger:

Thank you for your consideration of our manuscript, “Asian-White Differences in Short Sleep Duration by Industry of Employment and Occupation in the US: A Cross-sectional Study,” for publication in BMC Public Health. We are delighted to have the opportunity to provide a second set of revisions based upon the comments and recommendations of Reviewer #1. Changes in the revised manuscript to address concerns raised are described here and highlighted in the text.

Reviewer Number: 1

1. There are still a few grammatical errors. For example, there is an "a" missing on p. 14 in the sentence "...was found in prior study..."; on p. 16, there is an error in verb tense in the sentence "...may have also influence the ability..."

Thank you catching the grammatical errors. In addition to reading the manuscript to identify other grammatical errors, we have inserted the word “a” into the sentence, which now reads: “Although a high prevalence of short sleep duration
among manufacturing/construction, transportation/warehousing, and public administration workers was found in a prior study, the results of this study were not stratified by race.” We also modified the following sentence for greater clarity and to address the verb tense issue: “Furthermore, technology (e.g. internet with email capabilities, cellular phones) may have also increased the accessibility of employees in ways that enhance job strain as well as disrupt sleep [47, 48], and use of technology may have differential impacts by race/ethnicity.”

2. The numbers in Table 1 should be re-checked because some of the “Total” results in the last column don’t make sense based on the stratified results in the other columns. For example, how can the prevalence of short sleep among all workers “living in poverty” (37%) be higher than the prevalence among either Whites (32%) or Asians (35%)?

Thank you. We checked the results, and the original findings are correct. We have determined that these results occurred because of a statistical phenomenon known as Simpson’s paradox where the aggregate can be lower or higher than both stratified groups (i.e. whites and Asians). For greater clarity and to acknowledge these results, we added the following footnote to Table 1: “The non-US-born, poverty and household income findings for the total sample of participants may differ from the stratified groups of whites and Asians due to the statistical phenomenon known as Simpson’s paradox whereby the aggregate can differ from both stratified groups.”

We hope that the recommendations and concerns raised in the review have been adequately addressed. Thank you for your consideration of this revised manuscript. We look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,

Chandra L. Jackson, PhD, MS (on behalf of all authors)
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
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