Author's response to reviews

Title: Strong association between earlier abuse and revictimization in youth

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Version: 3  Date: 26 May 2014

Author's response to reviews:

Reviewer's report
Title: Risk factors by gender for violence victimization among Swedish youths: a cross-sectional study
Version: 2  Date: 18 January 2014
Reviewer: Shervin Assari
Reviewer's report:

Thank you for your valuable point of views, which we have considered sincerely and handled as follows

There are several minor issues, in addition to a few major problems. One of the major problems is that authors have not cited many relevant works (1) Mohammadkhani, J Sex Med. 2009 Jul;6(7):1938-46. 2) Mohammadkhani, et al., J Sex Med. 2009).

Certainly interesting papers departing from married women and men in Iran adding knowledge about coerced anal sex, psychopathology and gender. However, as our informants are non-married young men and women attending youth health centers and the aim of the paper is to address violence exposure before age of 15, we find the references beyond our objective and other cited references.

Another major problem is with the analysis. Hierarchical regression could be much more informative than only having 2 models (unadjusted and full). Why all variables have been added to the model at the same time?

As the researchers focus was to estimate a final best fitting model, with several interesting factors of exposures, the practice of building and showing hierarchical regression models was not chosen since this would have ended in a huge table.
The researchers have described the order of analysis in the statistical analysis section further as stepwise building separate but related models to successively end up with the best fitting model in the results section. Each individual variable/factor’s potential contribution was not the main focus, thus the researchers chose to illustrate only the unadjusted and full models (page 10-11, paragraph 3)

All sociodemographic and individual risk factors proved to be significant for one or several dependent variables, and thus all were included in the model. The same model was used in both men and women, see page 10, paragraph 3 and also clarified in the Table head for table 3-5, page 23-25

Another major drawback is lack of theory.

The theoretical background is complemented using a public health approach but also revictimization theories, see page 5, paragraph 3 and page 6, paragraphs 1 and 3.

Finally, a main challenge is considering some behaviors (such as smoking) as risk factors of violence. Do authors believe that individuals are being exposed to violence because (using the word risk factor) they smoke? This is another reason I argue that authors should not have an unadjusted and a full model. We know to know what are ORs associated with other factors when smoking (just as an example) is not controlled.

We do not regard smoking as an isolated event as a risk factor, but in association to violence exposure more as a proxy for low socio-economy, see page 16 and paragraph 2.

As explained earlier, in the statistical section, we decided to not use a hierarchical regression model.

A few examples of the minor problems with the paper:
1- The first sentence says "Youth violence is recognized as a significant public health problem". Youth violence is mostly about youth perpetrator, but this paper is about victimization.

We are aware of that some authors write about both violence victimization and violence perpetration in youth in the same article. The main parts of our references include violence victimization only and have decided to withdraw Reference 1 from the first sentence.

2- Paper title is on gender difference. The conclusion of the abstract is not on gender differences.

The title is changed into: Strong association between earlier abuse and revictimization in youth
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:
none