Author's response to reviews

Title: Socioeconomic differences in childhood length/height trajectories in a middle-income country: a cohort study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dr. Frank Popham  
Editor, BMC Public Health  

Dear Dr. Popham,

Re: MS: 7566031481160034 - Socioeconomic differences in childhood length/height trajectories in a middle-income country: a cohort study

Thank you for your e-mail dated 3 July 2014 inviting us to respond to editorial requests.

1. Ethics approval
Please add a statement of local ethical approval for conduction of the study, over and above that received from Montreal.

Response: As there is an absence of a formal ethical review structure locally in Belarus, we have ensured we received formal approval from the Ministry of Health in Belarus and from Montreal Children’s Hospital, and further follow-ups also had ethical approval from the Human Subjects Committees at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) Law and Ethics Committee. Hence, we have added the following to the Methods section:

PROBIT was approved by the Belarusian Ministry of Health and received ethical approval from the institutional review board of the Montreal Children’s Hospital for both the original PROBIT trial and the 6.5-year follow-up. The participating parent/guardian signed consent forms in Russian at each phase.

2. Funding statement
Please delete the Funding section and add all funding information to the Acknowledgements section.

Response: We have added the following to the end of the Acknowledgements section:

Acknowledgements: We are grateful to the cohort members and their parents for their generous participation in the study, to the maternity hospital staff and polyclinic paediatricians who examined all the children and ensured a very high follow-up rate, and to the dedication of the members of the Belarusian team who ensured that this trial could start and who continue to support and guide the study through all stages of PROBIT. Funding: Supported by a grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (to MSK) and from the European Union’s project on Early Nutrition Programming: Long-term Efficacy and Safety Trials (grant code: FOOD-DT-2005-007036 to RMM). RMM, DAL & LDH work in a UK Medical Research Council Unit. DAL’s contribution to this work is supported by a UK Economic
and Social Research Council large grant (grant code: RES-060-23-0011). LDH is funded by a UK Medical Research Council Population Health Scientist award (G1002375). The NIHR Bristol Nutrition Biomedical Research Unit is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and is a partnership between University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Bristol. None of the funding bodies influenced the data collection, analysis or its interpretation for this paper. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily any funding body.

3. Trial registration information
Please place the trial registration numbers at the end of the abstract, and add the trial registration date(s).

Response: We have added the following to the end of the abstract:

Clinical Trial Registration Information—Current Controlled Trials: ISRCTN37687716 assigned 9 Sept 2005 (http://www.controlled-trials.com/ISRCTN37687716); ClinicalTrials.gov Identifier: NCT01561612 received 20 Mar 2012.

We look forward to the outcome of your consideration of our revised manuscript. We hope our responses are satisfactory but please do not hesitate to contact us if more information is required.

Yours sincerely,

Rita Patel, on behalf of the co-authors