Author's response to reviews

Title: Injuries in Aleppo, Syria; first population-based estimates and characterization of predominant types

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Editor
Response to reviewers
Marilyn Leff

Many thanks for continuing to alert us to importantly points that we need to attend to improve our paper. I have responded to the new comments as follows.

A general note about the poisoning issue, which seems to be problematic (rightly so). I can assure both reviewers that this type of report represents to the most extent acute gastrointestinal symptoms induced by ingesting contaminated food. This was clarified during the formative work (ref 10,11). I have clarified this more in the methods and limitation part of the discussion.

The whole manuscript was edited for clarity and to accommodate the modifications introduced.

1- The gender predominance of the sample is explained in the text. For the representativeness of the sample I include below (Appendix, 1) a comparison between age-gender composition of our sample and the most recent census (2004). So now the beginning of methods, where we characterize our sample, gives a fair description of our sample. The 1994 census data are now not used at all. The denominators for the household injuries are now derived from actual number of household members collected during the survey (they were in paper format and not available for the analysis in the earlier version that's why we relied on the census data).

2- We have repeated all analyses using weighted sample and modified the methods and references accordingly.

3- Results, the wording is modified and reference to differences that were not statistically significant is modified accordingly. All analyses were repeated, and age-injury difference is now statistically significant.

4- Household data. Reference for the gender-related differences in injuries was made to Figure 1 in addition to table 2. These results are clear on Figure 1. For this same reason Figure 1 is not redundant as it presents important data (reviewer Eleni Petridou). However, we had a mistake in the figure legend that could have lead to this misunderstanding, which is now corrected. Also, the figure is modified to show per 1000 rates rather than proportions in order to conform with other estimates used throughout the study (Figure 1 pertains only to household data).

5- I have modified the discussion of injury rates to avoid any misunderstanding (related to poisoning). I also modified the discussion of comparison with the Tanzanian study to data from Dar es Salam and the relevant types of injuries.

7- I understand that recall and telescopic bias are separate types and have modified the alluded to sentence accordingly. As for recall bias, it is obviously a threat to any self reported survey (even for shorter periods of recall). What is worrisome is when there is an indication that these recall problem has lead to differential misclassification (people with disease more likely to remember exposures and vice versa). We don't think that this is a substantial threat to our data and analysis.

Eleni Petridou
Thanks for the additional insights. The major issue of food poisoning is addressed in more detail now (please see opening note, Dr. Leff).

The descriptive analysis for the variables introduced in the logistic model is in table 1. Education, as you rightly point out, is included in the SES score and alone. We have now corrected this by excluding education from the regression model.

As for the figures and table redundancy, Figure 1 presents novel data for household members (gender stratification of household data, please see note 4, Dr. Leff). As for the tables I have combined the categories with few events together in tables 1 and 2 and Figure 1.

Regards
Wasim Maziak
Appendix, 1, age-gender stratification of the sample compared to the general census of 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>F F M M both both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-19 years</td>
<td>53.59 51.72 54.95 53.27 54.27 52.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>17.75 16.78 15.83 15.96 16.79 16.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>16.30 17.28 14.16 15.45 15.24 16.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>10.23 11.20 12.61 11.09 11.42 11.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;65 y</td>
<td>2.13 3.02 2.45 4.24 2.29 3.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>