Author's response to reviews

Title: The positive association between number of children and obesity in Iranian women and men: Results from the National Health Survey

Authors:

Enayatollah Bakhshi (Bakhshi@razi.tums.ac.ir)
Mohammad Reza Eshraghian (eshraghian@yahoo.com)
Kazem Mohammad (mohamadk@tums.ac.ir)
Abbas Rahimi Foroushani (rahimifo@tums.ac.ir)
Hojat Zeraati (zeraatih@tums.ac.ir)
Akbar Fotouhi (afotouhi@tums.ac.ir)
Fraidon Siassi (siassif@sph.tums.ac.ir)
Behjat Seifi (behins@yahoo.com)

Version: 3 Date: 3 March 2008

Author's response to reviews:

Dear Natalie Pafitis,

We appreciate your journal's reviewers valuable suggestions which led to substantial improvements in our manuscript. Below we have provided a point by point response to all reviewers' comments and concerns.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The second paragraph was added (P7- We started¿). Therefore, the lines 20-23(p8) were added.

2. The paragraphs 2, 3, 4 (p9- Comparing two models¿.), the paragraph 2 (p10) and lines 20-23(p8) were added.

3.

3-1: SAMPLING

This article is based on the results of the Second Health Survey in Iran (2nd NHS). All citizens living in Iran were considered as survey population. A household was defined as those living in the same residence, participating in the household¿s expenses and usually eat together. Any individual living single was also considered a household. The statistical framework used, was based on the households' list available with every Health Department in the provinces, usually updated annually. Sampling was conducted on the basis of the cluster method, each cluster comprising of 8 households. The process was as follows: first of all, based on population size and one-day performance capacity of the data collection group, number of clusters was identified; second, the population size was divided to number of clusters to find out the systematic cycle; third, by using simple random sampling, the first cluster was chosen from the first cycle; forth, rest of clusters were systematically selected from the rest of households' list.
3-2: CORRELATION

a) We focused our study on the respondents who lived in Tehran Province only.

b) Tehran is a capital city and people who lived in Tehran are relatively more homogeneous than those living in whole Iran.

c) We excluded: 1) the households with a pregnant woman inside; 2) those households that do not include a father or a mother; 3) those households with a single person inside, from the analyses. Hence, the cluster size is reduced.

d) It was found that the correlation within households is much higher than that of between households.

We believe the right choice is to apply GEE model and consider the correlation between couples rather than ignore it and, instead, consider between households correlations. We checked this idea using SAS PROC GENMOD and considered couples nested in households as correlated data and realized that, when couples are considered as clusters, it is not needed to consider households' clusters.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. We did it (page2-conclusion).
2. Two references (No 35, 36, 41) and the third paragraphs (p9) are added.
3. We did it (p3, line8).
4. We did it (p3, start of paragraph4).
5. We corrected it (p5, line8).
6. We did it (p5, line17).
7. We did it (p5, line19-21, workforce status: ¿).
8. We did it (p7, line17).
9. We deleted it (p9, conclusion).
10. We added ¿statistical analyses section¿ (p6, lines 9-19), (p8, lines 15-17) and footnotes (Table 2)

M. R. Eshraghian
Corresponding Author